THE NOTION OF PHYSICALITY IN VOCAL TRAINING FOR THE PERFORMER IN SOUTH AFRICAN THEATRE, WITH PARTICULAR REFERENCE TO THE ALEXANDER TECHNIQUE

THESIS

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Abstract.

Voice training has been influenced by separatist attitudes which have allowed for classes which train the body to be separate from those which train the voice. This study acknowledges that to train an actor in separate compartments and then expect the completeness of human expression in performance, is to train under false pretences. There is a need to address the imbalance of separatism and this is examined within the context of voice training. An holistic approach to voice training forms the basis of the argument, which focuses on the need to re-educate the notion of physicality in voice training.

Chapter one proposes an understanding of the notion of physicality by drawing on the attitudes of selected theatre practitioners towards the physical nature of the theatre encounter. The expressive energies of the actor's body are responsible for the physicalisation of a play; for this reason the movement of voice and speech is not only examined as source movement, but also as the movement of an actor's response and communication. Chapter two examines some practices which led to attitudes of separatism in voice training, and introduces prevalent practices which are attempting to involve the energy of the physical experience. Chapter three proposes that the Alexander technique be used as the foundation for an awareness of individual physicality. Where chapter one examines the theory of this notion, chapter three proposes an experiential understanding of the same. The Alexander technique is a training in effective body use and it's principles are fundamental to an awareness of body use and functioning. It is argued that these principles should underlie a re-education of physicality. The final chapter of the thesis argues for physicality in South African voice training programmes which would complement the physicality of contemporary theatre forms.

It is hoped that this study will provide further incentive for the continued review and adjustment of drama training in South Africa.

Contents

Acknowledgements.

Introduction.

Since the turn of this century vocal training has changed considerably. Eighteenth and nineteenth century practices of elocution taught the correct placement of speech and the rules of vocal delivery, for example pause, emphasis and rhythm. The degree of vocal competence was judged according to the rules of phonetics and pronunciation, and this concept of vocal competence was the yard stick by which the actor's[1] performance was judged. In keeping with early twentieth-century attitudes of rationality, the voice was investigated scientifically, and this research was used to ensure a thorough technical training for the actor. A surge of writing and researching in the first half of the century recorded scientific enquiry into methods of controlled breathing and the workings of the organs of speech, all of which functioned to give social and academic credit to this training and skill.

The emphasis on the technical training of good speech reflected separatist attitudes towards the training of the actor as a communicator. The voice was not viewed as an attribute of the entire and unified communicating being, but rather as a self-existent tool or instrument which could be trained, in isolation from the body, to transmit meaning. The movements of the body were classified as gesture and posture and understood as supporting contributions to the process of communication. Such attitudes reflect the marginalisation of the body in Western societies and the denial of the communicating wholeness of the individual. Actor training was characterised by dualist attitudes which separated mental and physical activities. Such separatism resulted in the voice being trained in voice and speech classes and the body being trained in dancing lessons or lessons on gesture and facial expression. The natural alliance which exists between the voice and the body was not acknowledged in the training of an actor, yet it was expected and implemented during performance.

This study addresses the need to re-educate the notion of physicality in vocal training. In South Africa the current theatre aesthetic is changing as it reflects the

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1   In keeping with contemporary practice, the term actor will be used to signify both the male and the female performer and does not imply sexist reference.

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motion of political and social change. Basic to this study is an acknowledgement of a rising physicality in contemporary South African theatre, which appears to be in response to the need to express and investigate the action of change. The subject matter of action is imitated through the medium of action making the theatre experience an organic and immediate encounter. The present actor training programmes should train the actor in the service of dynamic and spontaneous action. In most university drama departments around the country the re-examination of syllabi has been ongoing for several years, and many changes have been implemented. These departments have generally attempted to "Africanise" (Haynes 1990, Ahmed 1989) both in terms of black staffing and students, and in the use of less eurocentrically based literature and examination standards. Dalrymple's (1987) publication on this topic is particularly significant.

It is hoped that this study will provide further incentive for the drama training in South Africa to be reviewed and adjusted to present needs. As the combined energies of the voice and the body are the physicalisation of the text, which can be either written or oral, the training of the body and its expressive attributes should be integrated and of prime importance. Furthermore, the rich diversity of cultural statements in South Africa provides a vast spectrum of interpretations of the notion of physicality; all of which somehow need to be accommodated into a training programme suited to the development of a changing theatre aesthetic.

This study provides one understanding of the notion of physicality. The personal perspective of this understanding is white, female and based on the theories of selected European theatre practitioners; personal experience in the Alexander technique,[2] and research into South African theatre. The theories of theatre practitioners are used to reinforce the awareness that the theatre is a physical place, in which the meaning, insight and emotion of a play is communicated to the audience by the physical sensations that the actor creates. This physical rendition of the play's concepts is most effectively achieved once the actor has realised that the voice, senses, emotions, thoughts and body are interrelated.

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2   I have been a student of the Alexander technique for the past two years.

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The Alexander technique contributes towards an understanding of physicality by its teaching of effective body use, and the experience of body awareness that it gives to the individual. Although this is a training in body use which was arrived at through a European perspective of the body, it is the foundational premise of this thesis that the Alexander technique could be incorporated into most vocal training programmes (see footnote 3). This technique teaches optimal body use which is applicable to every individual, and essential to the actor whose physical demands and challenges are constant in performance and rehearsal. In South Africa the dance, mime and action of urban Black theatre are encouraging a return to physicality generally in the theatre, making it essential that the actor's body is trained to cope with these expectations and to execute the activities most efficiently. A training in the Alexander technique will ensure the maximum efficient use of the body[3]. This is the ideal condition for voice training; one in which the body is being used efficiently and the voice is free to function well. The teaching of an effective relationship between the neck the head and the back is basic to the Alexander technique . This relationship has obvious and enormous consequences for vocal production and is the primary motivation for the inclusion of this technique into voice training programmes. It provides a useful understanding of the individual's sense of physicality, which could be used in vocal training which is holistic in nature.

The incorporation of the Alexander technique into an actors performing and training curriculum may be regarded as an urgent necessity, and one which needs to be addressed within the context of the need to re-educate the notion of physicality.

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3   The Alexander technique arose due to problems concerning vocal production in a Western theatre practice. In providing argument for the utilisation of the technique in South African vocal training, an area of close investigation should be whether or not this technique can be utilised to serve the needs of black theatre practice. The survey which was conducted (see Chapter four), functioned as an initial and general enquiry into the use of the technique in a selected and small area of performance training in South Africa. The survey acknowledges the need for further investigation.

Chapter One:
The notion of physicality.

This study aims to develop an understanding of the notion of physicality. Such an understanding is the conceptual basis of the need to address the notion and practice of physicality in contemporary vocal training for the theatre. An examination of the physicality of the theatrical encounter will provide one dimension of this broad and largely undefined concept.

Many theatre theorists, when discussing the nature of the theatrical event, tend to refer to the Aristotelian principles governing the performance of dramatic poetry or tragedy. These six principles which define the classical features of a dramatic performance are: "plot, character, diction, thought, spectacle and song" (Dorsch 1977, 39). Dorsch records Aristotle's belief that of these, "plot" is the foremost in importance:

> ... for tragedy is a representation, not of men, but of action and life, of happiness and unhappiness - and happiness and unhappiness are bound up with action. The purpose of living is an end which is a kind of activity, not a quality; it is their characters, indeed, that make men what they are, but it is by reason of their actions that they are happy or the reverse (*ibid.*).

The theatre performance can be understood as a physical experience of a series of actions. These actions have their roots in imitation, a term used by Aristotle in *The Poetics* (Trans. House 1958). The term, according to House (*op. cit.*, 124), was used by Aristotle to denote either mimicry or the imitation of art works. Mimicry, being "imitation in the same medium, in the same material as the thing imitated" (*ibid.*). Imitation, in the sense of works of art, being a copy which lacks the likeness of material and medium; for example a picture of a flower is imitated through paint on canvas. Aristotle's mimicry in theatre is the imitation of the individual in action and the medium through which this imitation is executed, is also the individual in action. The essence of the theatrical experience is therefore in the qualities of action namely: aliveness, spontaneity and ephemerality.

The action of the theatre is life action which is shared by the actor and the audience.

This life action asserts itself in the present (Brook 1968, 112) making the event an "encounter" (Growtowski 1975) between two intensely identifying and physically present parties. The actor, who plays a role in theatre and a role in ordinary life, can identify with the life action presented in the script and because of this, develop the script's action into life action on the stage. The actor is the key element which physicalises the script and creates a "different language" (Clurman 1950, 275) which is the visual and physical, and merely suggested by the script. The efficacy of the theatrical encounter rests with the actor's ability to create the visual language and the audiences ability to read it. In *Performance: New Directions in Theatre* (1987), Hilton proposes the binary nature of theatre which is that "everything in the world off-stage has its performance equivalent" (*ibid.*, 14). The actor who is a real person off-stage is able to be an imagined person on-stage and through "acts of designation" (*ibid.*), binary pairs between the performance world and the non-performance world are established. The actor is given a sense of reality because the audience recognises real off-stage properties of the imagined on-stage character. The actor, through the signs of costume for example, will provide the necessary information about a particular period which the audience needs to identify, in order to understand and be a part of it. In the same way, an imagined environment which is real off-stage can be created on-stage through words and actions, and identified by the audience. The audience is the presence which completes the creative process of acting. It is the physical presence which provides the reason for the performance and brings to the performance its own experiences; adding dimensions of tension and personal meaning. The audience is necessary to establish "a collective consciousness [which] is generated [and] all who are part of the event, in whatever capacity, share" (Hilton *op. cit.*, 32-33). This collective consciousness is the reason why an actor is able to convince an audience that he is Othello for example. The collective consciousness is a performance consciousness, which when triggered off, allows the audience to accept the reality of ordinary every day people playing at being someone else on stage. The collective consciousness is established because of the features of Hilton's binary principle. This notion of on-stage\ off-stage equivalents, gives meaning to a performance and reinforces Growotowski's vision of theatre as an encounter between two identifying parties. In *Between Theatre and Anthropology*, Schechner acknowledges that both ritual and aesthetic theatre cannot exist when detached from the audience. He says:

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Spectators are very aware the moment when a performance takes off. A "presence" is manifest, something has "happened". The performers have touched or moved the audience, and some kind of collaboration, collective theatrical life is born (1985, 14).

The theatrical event is a physical encounter and relies on the physicality of the human body in action. The early Greek dramas upheld human action as the most important feature of tragedy. Ironically the Greek tragedy, which was considered more credible than the lower form of comedy, was physically quite still in it's presentation. There are two reasons for this: firstly the actor was disadvantaged by heavy and elaborate costumes and masks; and secondly Greek tragedies only imitated action which was positive. Action which was base, lascivious or ugly was not considered worthy of imitation. Implied is an attitude to the physicality of the body which was controlled. This contrasts with the theatre developments of twentieth-century practitioners such as Brook and Growtowski, who rely on the developed and dynamic adaptability of the performer's body to interpret the given text. Such practitioners have been part of current trends towards re-educating and re-establishing the physicality of performance and performance training. There is a need to address the possible neglect of the expressiveness of the body, in favour of the expressiveness of the vocal delivery of the text. The focus on the delivery of the witticisms of the eighteenth-century's comedy of manners for example, may be understood as a cerebral focus which excluded the development of the body's expressiveness. Close concentration on the text, both in performance and rehearsal, tends towards a neglect of the body and implies dualist attitudes towards expression. The marginality of the body in western society has also provided reason for the cerebral theatre to be given greater credit than the physical; with possible repercussions in the theatre training programmes and theatre performances. It is these issues which the re-education of physicality is attempting to address.

In a discussion on training the actor, the form of theatre for which the individual is being trained, and the possible mediums used in this training need to be investigated. An act of theatre is engaged when space is designated and observation takes place (Brook 1968, Hilton 1987, Schechner 1985). By this definition all forms of theatre are physical in that an actor actively creates and the audience actively receives the experience. Some forms of theatre do not use the physicality of the human body; Son et Lumiere, sound and light displays and animal displays are

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examples. The theatre to which I refer depends on entertainment and the display of human skills. Different skills are displayed within the different genres of theatre. Realism in the theatre which emerged at the end of the nineteenth century, demanded truth on the stage and the recreation of the "life of the human spirit" (Magarshack 1947, 25). These skills, displayed by the Stanislavsky trained actor of the time, were those which promoted truth in physical actions, thus evoking belief. In other words, the extent to which the actor was transformed into the state of "I am" (*ibid*, 52) determined the extent of the actors skill and success. These actors were trained to employ their own subconscious to help create the character's consciousness. Success was gauged in terms of the believability of the characterisation.

The Brechtian performance skills were focused less on the psychology of physical action and more on the essential physicality and labour (Willett 1977). These performance skills, in contrast to the previous example, were unemotional, unhypnotic, illustrative and demonstrative. These skills suited the didactic nature of the event, as belief and truth suited the realistic theatre. The success of the Brechtian performance was gauged by the extent to which it provided social information and critical comment. Highly active mechanical skills, such as slide projections, were employed to counterpoint the skills of the performer. The genre of the theatre form tends to determine the skills which the actor requires.

A training in acting skills requires a developed awareness of the self. The performer needs to be aware of the limitations and abilities of the body; how the body works, what it can do and what it can be trained to do. In essence, once the actor has an awareness of the vocabulary of the body, trained and natural, only then is there the freedom to choose the most effective method of physicalising the character. Being aware also means being able to discover personal assumptions about the physical self (King 1981, 12). Performers who lack confidence and are inhibited often reinforce this personal assumption by instinctively responding unconfidently. Awareness is required to counteract the damaging effects of these assumptions; with training, they can be changed. Awareness is part of being sensitive to constant changes in the body.

The term "sensory awareness" was first coined by Selver in 1950 as a name for her version of the work originated by Lisa Grindler at the turn of the century (Brooks

1974, 229). Grindler suffered from collapsed lung disease, for which there was no known cure except rest. Her intuition told her that with quiet and patience she might be able to sense her inner processes and through this find ways of encouraging healing. Brooks records her practice: "when the inner functioning could be sensed, hindrances could consciously be allowed to dissolve and cease interfering with the organism's innate tendencies to regeneration" (*ibid.*, 230). This work laid the foundation for the practice of sensory awareness, based on the study of the consciousness and the ordering and functioning of the human organism. Recordings of this work have tended to suggest quasi-religious explorations of the layer of consciousness. This practice has, however, contributed significantly to concepts of self exploration of the body.

Sensory awareness introduces the awareness of the kinaesthetic sense. The kinaesthetic sense is "that which tells you what your body is doing in space, through the perception of movement in the muscles, tendons and joints" (King 1971, 12). For actors this form of sensory awareness is imperative to a training that is organic rather than intellectual. In using movement to "physicalise" (*ibid.*, 3) the internal structure of the character, the actor should become aware of what the movement feels like in space rather than intellectually applying it to space (Laban in Ullmann 1971, Maletic 1987). The kinaesthetic rather than the intellectual approach, will encourage the actor to become aware that it is the whole body that moves and a part, the arm for example, never really moves in isolation from the body (*ibid.*). This facilitates the actor's awareness of "being in the world through [the] body and the basis of knowledge [lying] in sensory-motor experience, the most intimate mode of knowing" (Foster 1976, 13).

A developed awareness of the body tends to address the problems of habitual interferences and unnecessary tensions. An actor's body should ideally be trained to be adaptable and flexible. It should be able to respond freely to the different styles, shapes and rhythms that the performance demands. Interferences and influences are negative "blocks" (Linklater 1976) in this process. Awareness of what is happening in the different sets of muscles and a conscious realisation of where and when the block occurs, is necessary in the training of a freely responsive body. Movement may be understood as a medium through which awareness can be developed. Laban's definition of movement is a dynamic process in time and space; flow and force (Maletic 1987, 172). Movement according to this definition, is characterised

by the following:

a) kinetic content (degree of lability) referring to flux and flow

b) dynamic content (degree of tension) referring to force

c) rhythmic content (degree of velocity, speed) referring to time

d) metric content (degree of extension) referring to space

(*ibid.*, 54).

Recognition of these characteristics is essential to actor training. The body's abilities and articulations in space, rhythm and time need to be explored to develop skills. The actor needs to understand how the body works naturally in terms of movement and it's potential for creativity and selection.

The metaphysical issue of the unity of mind/body will be explored in greater depth within the context of the Alexander Technique in chapter three. This study acknowledges the need to overcome the phenomenon of dualism which illustrated a dichotomy that "enforced the mechanistic view of human movement, explaining it according to the laws of innate motion" (Maletic *op. cit.*, 162). In so doing it promoted attitudes towards the individual as machine or instrument. At the beginning of this century movement theorists, such as Rudolf Laban, were concerned with the unity of mind and body. Laban in particular, worked continually in developing the link between the mental and physical aspects of movement; emotional and spiritual qualities were explored in an effort to evolve an holistic approach to human movement. Maletic records this:

Most significant is Laban's correlation of the attitudes towards motion factors and the various levels of consciousness. Attitudes towards space are associated with attention and mans' power of thinking, attitudes towards weight with intention and with sensing, attitudes towards time with decision and intuiting, and attitudes toward flow with progression and felling (*op. cit.*, 100).

Laban's connection with Jungian thought is significant in his effort to develop an understanding of the indivisibility of mind/body. In discussing the expressive potential of the body, Best suggests "that expressive meaning is a characteristic of the movement itself, rather than a reflection of that movement of an inner emotion at

deeper level" (1974, 45). He reinforces this view by asserting that emotion is an intricate part of any movement, it is not a separate event going on in the imperceptible regions of the mind. Emotion which is internal, personal and psychological, is understood as an idiosyncratic feature of movement. It is visible at the same surface level as the movement itself. Movement only renders itself unexpressive according to Best, when the spectator looks too deeply for meaning, rather than taking in immediately what is displayed at surface level. The unseen motivating dynamic is not hidden in some dark recess, unexplained or inferred. It is manifested quite openly in movement.

Laban's movement theory is a "dynamic form theory" (Maletic 1974, 171). In contrast to static form, it considers movement as a living changing transforming process of mind/body. The holistic nature of this process has revolutionised awareness of movement. Using movement as the medium of awareness is a basic premise of his work, in the same way as other practitioners; Feldenkrais (1980) King (1971), Pisk (1975), Foster (1976) and Rubin (1980), have advocated movement as the medium of awareness and expression. The understanding of movement as awareness, supports the theory that through feeling the movement, the individual develops a knowledge of the body. The notion of "feeling-knowing"[5] is important to an holistic approach to training the individual's physicality.

An actor training programme that incorporates movement reflects the physical binary principle of everything on-stage having an off-stage equivalent (Hilton *op. cit.*). The individual always moves to travel, gesticulate, breathe, communicate. Everyday actions such as sitting or lifting, not only display individual idiosyncratic qualities, but also display societal norms and influences. Individual movement has a social dimension. This form of movement is usually goal-orientated and customary in its behavioral pattern. Montessori, in discussing the importance of movement on child development records the notion of individual\social movement: "The very existence of the social order depends on movement directed to constructive ends. The individual in the womb of social life performs his actions for ends which are both individual and social" (1967, 150). In drama and dance, these actions are used

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5   I am indebted to Gary Gordon for this concept.

in a heightened form and must be trained to do so without loss of individual or social characteristics. These characteristics are responsible for specific interpretation and investment. Training for the physical theatre implies more than just an physiological awareness. It incorporates a sociological and psychological awareness. Marcel Mauss proposed that an analysis of the body should be made in terms of a unified triple perspective; "physio-psycho-socio" (Polhemus 1978, 21). In order to train the body for the physical theatre, it is proposed that the same three dimensions of awareness should apply. The training of the body should reflect a "unique inter-relationship of the physical, the social and the individual" (*ibid.*, 21), because the theatre experience reflects the same.

Movement in its different forms, has been used to train the actors body throughout the history of theatre training. Selected examples will illustrate this. Movement training in the eighteenth century was centred around gesture and the placement of the corsetted body. The source of such training, besides ballet, was to be found in observation and imitation of classical statues or paintings. These fixed imitations of life's actions imply comment on attitudes to the body of placement and control. Of this form of stage movement in actor training, Roger Pickering, London 1755, writes the following:

> I cannot conclude this Article, without recommending, to those who attempt to succeed Capitally upon the Stage the Study of the best Paintings, Statues and Prints, many of which may be inspected upon easy Terms. Among these the Attitudes of the Four Limbs are express'd through the several Passions, in a very grand and masterly manner, and, if happily hit of by an Actor, would place him to high Advantage upon the Stage (Barnett 1980/81, 1).

The corsetted unfree body was trained to arrive at a position and gesticulate. The placement of the body in a pose, was based on the learning of classical ballet positions of the feet (*ibid.*, 12-16). The cerebral level of training through observation, coupled with static positioning of the feet, was indicative of the lack of physicality in this training. The training aimed at aesthetic posing, which was indicative of the society and it's culture. How the body was placed to appear in society, adorned and positioned was reflected on the stage; the social body appearing on the social stage. The theatre training of the eighteenth century reflected the social training of manners: "... fencing classes, classes in deportment and dancing classes for young ladies" were held at the Paris Conservatoire (Hemmings 1987, 246).

Attitudes to the body in the twentieth century contrast with those displayed in previous centuries. This contrast is reflected in theatre performances, as this example from theatre dance illustrates. At the turn of the century Isadora Duncan's dance style was romantic, sweeping, extended and exposed. Her arms, according to Lloyd, were "extended and outgiving never fixed or formalised, easy hands with no artificial curvature" (1949, 4). Her feet were bare and her body quite exposed. She explored what her body could do as an expressive agent. She explored its shape, rhythm and most of all its sexuality. There was in Isadora a liberation that broke through all the restraints characteristic of middle class, industrialised, urban, social beings:

> Her philosophy was not particularly intellectual. It was based less on reason than instinct, on desire for self-expression, albeit an expression in relation to the rest of humanity. Much has been made of her quest for the soul or centre of movement and final locating of it in the solar plexus (*ibid.*, 7).

Her dance was spiritual and sexually liberated. It was about emotion and no longer a spectacle of balletic line or pattern, but rather a communication of experiences and perceptions. The physical liberation of Duncan's body and it's "free-naturalness" (Sears 1986, 45), laid the foundation for unlocked attitudes towards the body. Martha Graham extended this examination of Duncan's psycho-physical movement vocabulary, by exploring the notion of contraction and release, and a third dimension of "spiral or turn" (*ibid.*). Her Jungian, inwardly spiralling emotional search, coupled with a daringly released body, addressed classical attitudes in dance to the controlled and balanced body.

At the turn of the century, this freedom and release in dance, was echoed in theatre training. The actor of the twentieth century is no longer physically restrained. The body is naturally expressive and this potential is developed. The body is exposed and the effort of working is seen rather than concealed. The mid-century theatre practice of Jerzy Growtowski was significant in its training of the actor's body. The physical training was designed to "mobilise all the actor's resources" (Growtowski 1975, 178). The body was required to undergo an "act of revelation... revealing its abilities, skills and personal scenic technique. What the audience saw was the actor's body and its craft" (*ibid.*, 21). Training for this theatre practice was overtly physical, often using animal images which appealed to the instinct of physical

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manifestation. For example, the tiger exercise is one in which the performer is required to explore the physical tensions of waiting, preparing and then releasing in a leap forward (*ibid.*). This physical training aimed at creating a state of "via negativa" (*ibid.*, 18), which encouraged spontaneous expression, and explored:

> ...freedom from the time-lapse between inner impulse and outer reaction in such a way that the impulse is already an outer reaction. Impulse and action are concurrent: the body vanishes, burns, and the spectator sees only a series of visible impulses (*ibid.*).

Growtowski's theatre was richly physical, immediate and dynamic. He selected specific exercises to achieve certain physical results. Rubin collects together in *Movement for The Actor* (1980), information on different forms of movement which can be used in the training of the actors body. Martin, in Rubin, explains how Delsarte's successional flow can be used as a way to explore physical characterisation (*ibid.*, 27); and the techniques of T'ai Chi and Alexander are recorded as movement experiences that could be used to explore the psycho-physical nature of performance (*ibid.*). The re-education of physicality in actor training is again understood as necessary to the development of an holistic approach. Dance, with all its expressive qualities, is an obvious form of movement that can be incorporated into actor training. Of all the movement forms it is perhaps the most individual. Best (*op. cit.*) discusses dance as an expressive form, which expresses emotions particular to it. By implication an exploration of new forms of expression will develop an awareness of new forms of feeling; a development of the performer's individual capacity for feeling and through this, knowing. "By presenting the possibility of expressing emotion in the medium of physical movement peculiar to dance, [the performer] develops emotions which could not be known in any other way" (*ibid.*, 159). Dance has been recognised as the "purest of all movement expression" (Kraus and Chapman 1981, 335). "It is an activity which fosters the complete utilisation of the total body in order to express meaning and interpret feelings" (*ibid.*).

The need to re-educate physicality should be seen in the context of developing an holistic approach to actor training. The limitations of this study do not allow for every aspect of actor training to be examined. Whilst all areas of this training are related, this study has elected to concentrate on the use and practice of physicality in vocal training in particular. An examination of the physical aspects of vocal

production will attempt to highlight the concept of voice as a built-in attribute of a person's faculty of response. The physicality of vocal production should not be understood on the cerebral level, which implies dualist attitudes, but rather holistically as a feature of the human organism's total physicality.

The individual is capable of an infinite variety of possible ways of acting and reacting; this instinctive need to respond is shaped by the behavioral codes of society, which provide the individual with the necessary social activities of "being-in-the-world" (Turner 1984, 1). Communication can be understood as an instinctive response and language as a social phenomenon. Language is learned and acquired by the individual, from the society. This will be discussed in an attempt to develop an understanding of response. The physicality of language learning will also be introduced.

In *The Absorbent Mind* (1967) , Montessori discusses language development in the child. Her use of the term refers to two concepts: firstly, language as a development of speech sounds and spoken words; secondly, language as a linguistic form. Montessori records two nerve centres in the brain which are responsible for the existence of a language mechanism; namely, the centre responsible for hearing speech and the centre responsible for the production of speech. Outwardly the same division occurs ; the ear receives language whilst the mouth, nose and throat produces it. Montessori suggests that these " two organic centres develop separately, both on the physiological and psychological side." (*ibid.*, 121). The oral cavity developing more slowly than the aural which implies that the child responds to an aural stimulus, long before it is capable of returning the response in a reciprocal manner. The capacity of the child to speak takes longer to show itself, than does the capacity to hear.

Physiologically, Montessori notes the complexity and precision of the motor activities involved in producing language. These activities, whilst instinctive to the notion of response, have to be developed in accordance with the language of the society. An important facet of an individual's socialisation, which is the learning of culture specific signals, is the learning of social speech that is, language. This learning, Montessori advocates is by a process of provocation. That is, "sounds heard by the child *provoke* the delicate movements necessary to produce them." (*ibid.*, 122). Her theory of response complements other similar theories. Dennis Fry

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(1977, 108) records the notion of reaction initiating imitation. Van Riper (1978 , 99-102) examines several theories. Firstly, operant conditioning - when a word is imitated and rewarded, the reward initiates further imitation. Secondly, the autism theory which refers to self reward; when the sound which is produced has a pleasant sensation, the response to such a sensation is to repeat or extend. Thirdly, the nativistic theory; when the capacity for language learning is mobilised as the child innately discovers that the parents' noises do have structure and do have meaning. Whilst the nature of this discussion has not been to compare all the theories of language learning, it is interesting to note the similarity of reference to the latent capacity in Van Riper's record of the nativistic theory and the provocation theory of Montessori. Van Riper records: "Born in all human beings is a basic competence or propensity for language learning and the parent's speech merely triggers that latent capacity" (*op. cit.*, 102). In theorising that the sounds which are heard by the child provoke the movements necessary to produce that sound, Montessori's theory proposes a storage of a memory of sounds. She says:

> ...the movements for producing the words must be based on a substratum of sounds registered in the mind, because the movements he will make, depend on the sounds he has heard and which the mind has retained (*op. cit.*, 122).

The process is psycho-physical action. The child, in response to sound is motivated and excited: " The result is that words heard by the child set in motion the complicated mechanism by which he makes the movements needed to produce them." (*ibid.*, 124). Implied is the propensity for social communication which relies on vocal and aural action. Danish philologist, Otto Jesperson's theory of vocal play parallels Montessori's theory on one level. His theory is that "sound is always produced by movement and is nothing but the impression which that makes on the ear" (Phillips 1984, 52). What Montessori and Jesperson are emphasising is the existence of a unique mechanism for language, whose medium of operation is movement. Besides the development of language through a series of "provoked movements" (Montessori *op. cit.*), it is necessary to note that the whole supporting process of vocal production is based on movement. Voice and speech are as a result of action - action is movement.

The source of energy for voice and speech lies in the process of respiration. It is the expiration of air on which the process of speech is superimposed. Impulses of

response are carried through the nervous system of the body by the neurons (Palmer 1972, 183). The neuron is the only tissue involved in the conduction of nerve impulses. The first-order neuron is responsible for initial reaction. The second-order neuron initiates the motor fibre. Neurons are responsible for the action of the muscles and muscles move the skeleton. The movement of respiration is accomplished through the coordinated movement of the ribs via the contractions of the related muscles. The internal and external intercostal muscles, as well as the diaphragm, form the muscles of respiration. The pectorals (minor and major), the transverse thoracic, quadratus lumborum are specific examples of the muscles of respiration. Respiration takes place in response to pressure demands. As the thoracic framework enlarges, the volume in the thoracic area increases, thus decreasing the pressure in the lung cavity. When this happens, the pressure of the environmental air becomes greater, and to equilibrate the situation, rushes into the lungs. For sound to be produced, the expiration of air activates the prepared vocal cords into a state of vibration. The vocal cords are prepared by states of tension. Normally they are flaccid, but when nerve impulses from the brain signal the speech processes to begin, this condition changes. Sound waves are set up by these taut vocal cords. These waves are resonated and moulded by the movement of the speech organs into words of communication and language. The complexity of this coordinated motor activity supports the notion that the production of voice and speech is rooted in the source of movement.

The extent to which movement, as a feature of the individual's physicality, is being used in vocal training is examined in the context of some prevalent approaches to vocal training. One such approach, which will form the bulk of this discussion, is that of "voice-movement" (Gordon 1989, interview)[6]. Terms that may need definition in this discussion are the following: voice, refers to the phonation of the vocal cords, which produce sound waves that are amplified and resonated in other parts of the body; speech, is used to describe the processes and results of shaping the unstructured sound of voice into intelligible communication; the notion of vocal training includes both voice and speech.

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6   The writer has experience in this methodology both as pupil and teacher and it is therefore an area of close concentration.

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The foundational premise of voice-movement is the utilisation of movement energy to release vocal energy. For several years, research into the development of a voice-movement programme has established this premise. This research has been based on the need to evolve "an holistic approach to individual vocal potential -the imagination, the intellect, the body - the complete individual involved in producing sound and vocal energy" (*ibid.*). A programme of voice-movement tasks aims at using the energy of movement to release the energy of the voice. The movement is usually unstructured in style and unrestricted to encourage an infinite variety of possible ways in which the tasks may be executed by the individual. The aim of the task is clear, the way in which that aim is achieved is open to individual interpretation. Such attitudes towards individuality encourage the development of individual potential and creativity. Two further beliefs underlie this work. Firstly, that vocal release should develop the "natural" as opposed to the "familiar" voice (Linklater 1976, Berry 1987). Secondly, that once the voice is well resonated and free flowing, other inhibiting factors are either dealt with in the process, or are much easier to deal with at a later stage in the training.

Because of the experiential nature of this research, the following discussion on the nature and practice of a voice-movement programme needs to take place in the first person. There is room for academic objectivity at a later stage. This discussion will also include an account of my use of voice-movement in a school, which led to my need to investigate the practice further. During the period 1986-1988 I taught Speech and Drama at a private girls school in Johannesburg. The voice and speech practical syllabus was examined at the end of the Matric year, by means of a programme based on themes. There were several problems in these practical classes. The classes were large, ranging from 15 - 5 students. The venue was adequate in terms of comfort and size, but inadequate in terms of location; the afternoon double period coincided with science practicals in the laboratories situated above, and we were aware that our energy was disturbing their quiet concentration. In the minds of the students these classes were usually associated with examination preparation; this attitude had to be addressed so that the students were not afraid to explore the processes of vocal training, in the fear that they were not preparing for the examination. There were also problems in the mixed expectations and attitudes of the students. Black students wanted to communicate effectively in their second language, and pass a practical examination in English with above average

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competence. White students knew they had a good chance of passing the examination so they either wanted to pass it very well or were satisfied with adequate standards. Their parents wanted them to "get self confidence" and speak "nicely". The attitude problem was also related to the motivation for taking the subject. The subject is categorised by the Joint Matriculation Board in Category D, which offers option subjects. One of the options is either Speech and Drama or French. As French at that time was only offered on the Higher grade, this implied that students who struggled on the higher grade did Speech and Drama; this was understandably the most damaging dynamic. Children often did the subject, not because they really wanted to, but because they could not cope academically, or because the French language laboratory had limited facilities. The effects of the academic issues were great, not only on the children who were in a competitive academic environment, but also on the marketability of the subject. Attitudes of marginality towards the arts in general were highlighted in the case of drama as an academic subject. Whilst these disappointed students were in the minority, they added a particularly negative dynamic, which was exposed in practical classes.

Most of these problems can be and were overcome. It was the task of the teacher to win over the non-voluntary children to the subject. The expectations and attitudes of the students were explored in various ways and the size of the group became a reason for the use of movement tasks in vocal training. The competitive energy implied in the school situation was injected into these classes, setting up a dynamic which was interesting and unpredictable. A group of people who are individually exploring a given task, yet exploring at the same time in the same space, tend to unconsciously set up intermittent relationships with each other which generate new energies, patterns and ideas. This situation can feed and simultaneously challenge a person's own creative expression. Furthermore, the individuals in the group are encouraged to establish their own creative statements more strongly, and be aware that these are significant and unique.

A democratic and holistic approach to movement was adopted. Firstly, it was assumed that all individuals can move and have equal potential. Secondly, attitudes towards inadequacy, particularly academic inadequacies, were addressed; the notion of there being a correct or an incorrect, weaker or stronger manner of approach, was not upheld. The form of movement used in these classes was unstructured and free

in an effort not to impose on individual creativity. The students had a class once a week in a modern dance form, taken by an outside teacher, which did influence them in a certain style of moving, but more importantly functioned as an extension of their own movement vocabulary. The movement tasks in voice classes were goal-orientated. For example: to energise ; run and touch all the corners of the room, run in a circle, touch the floor, jump to the ceiling. To focus ; lie on the floor, feel the breathing, listen to the sounds inside the body and outside the room, roll over from one side to the other, first let the knees go, then the pelvis, then the torso, then the head, and simultaneously let the voice roll out.

Movement in voice classes can be used for a variety of reasons. It can be used in the form of a warm-up, either energising the class or channelling unfocussed energy. A warm up should aim to focus concentration, develop a particular awareness and release tensions. McCallion says that before a performance an actor needs to feel totally "limber and supple" (1989, 211). Furthermore, the actor needs to re-tune into the world of the play and the theatre space. This also applies to the voice class, which is most effective when students are re-tuned into the expectations and demands of vocal work. Movement can be used to release the voice, investigate postural alignment, and explore the "inherent rhythmic movement logic in speech" (Phillips 1984, 96). This notion of movement logic in speech was investigated by Phillips as a practical solution to tutoring the vocal delivery of English poetry to South African Indian drama students. In developing an understanding of speech movement, Phillips examined the movement activities of speech in terms of Laban's effort analysis of movement. As these activities are the results of effort, she developed an understanding of their qualities of time and weight, and their movement through space. For example: the effort qualities of the plosive 'p' (bilabial) - gentle in weight, sudden in time, and direct in the use of space; the lip-rounded vowel 'u:' in 'boot' (classified high, back, long) - firm in weight, sustained in time and direct in space. Phillips used an understanding of the movement logic of speech to explore expressive and meaningful speech. For example, an awareness of the fine weight and sudden time of the vowel in 'skip', will assist particularly the second language speaker, with understanding the expressive quality and meaning of the word. An elongation of the vowel, rendering it firm and sustained, suggests a different quality of the known activity. An awareness of movement logic in speech addresses the problems of stress and rhythm

which second language users often experience. The Indian students with whom Phillips worked had studied Laban's movement theory in their movement classes, and were able to apply this awareness of body effort to an understanding of the effort and movement qualities of sound. Phillips records:

> ...we devised a way of enacting the successive sound elements with body movements accompanying the spoken words. Using bodily and facial gesture, combined with vocalised oral gestures, we explored the inherent movement of the sounds, and found that sounds reveal so many aspects of what they signify, thereby elucidating meaning (*ibid.*).

Phillips' methodology makes reference to Christabel Burniston's "verbal dynamics" (Burniston and Bell 1972, 3). In explaining the term, Burniston refers to Laban's analysis and definition of movement effort. She notes that the combination of the qualities of weight, time and space results in "the fundamental principle of all movement: rhythm" (*ibid.*). It is rhythm which underlies the concept of verbal dynamics. Rhythm is felt in the movement of sound production, words and connected language. These specific actions are like bodily actions; the energy they use in space constitutes rhythm. Burniston's practice is to combine the spoken word with its implied movement or action thereby achieving maximum expression. In so doing, both speech and action are "dynamically invigorated" (*ibid.*). Burniston's verbal dynamics succeeds in developing an awareness of the mobility and muscularity of the movements of speech through the movements of the body. Verbal dynamics is a training in the forms of expressive gesture.

Phillips (*op. cit.*) records the notion of "audible gesture", as a feature of the human organism's faculty of response. It has been hypothesised that this form of gesture was the original "language" (*ibid.*, 54, Horner 1970, 21) through which human beings communicated. This is a widely accepted notion that human speech had its origins in gesture which is movement. In his publication *Movement, Voice and Speech*, Horner records two theories that support this notion. The Gesture Theory which was formulated by the nineteenth-century psychologist Wilhelm Wundt. Wundt's thesis was based on the notion of a consistent relationship between sensory perception and its resultant expression. In other words gesture always expressed an individual's feelings and ideas and evoked the same in others. Sir Richard Paget developed Wundt's gesture theory through the Oral Gesture Theory. Horner records Paget's theory:

...as man became increasingly involved occupationally, his limbs became less and less available for gesture language. Tongue and lips therefore took over the making of gesture with the added advantage that when vocalised they become 'audible gestures' and infinitely more resourceful communicationally (*ibid.*, 21-22).

Phillips agrees with Paget's Oral Gesture Theory, that is, that individuals were driven to speech, because of the problem of talking "with his hands full" (*op. cit.*, 54). The use of the hands in craftsmanship, hunting, art and agriculture forced the individual to find another way of executing the necessary activity of communication. The specialised movement of the tongue and the lips became the medium. Paget's Oral Gesture Theory is a theory of "the gesture of the mouth and more specifically of the tongue" (*ibid.*). Gesture is a behavioral activity common to all living creatures. It can be used to elicit response or communicate information. Any form of mating behaviour is an example of this. Phillip's use of the movement logic of speech is an application of "audible gestures" (*ibid.*, 3) or what Laban termed "audible movement" (in Ullmann 1971, 8).

When I left school teaching I returned to teaching in a university drama department. It has been mostly in this situation that the work of voice-movement has developed. In particular, my personal research into the use of movement in releasing the voice and complementing the awareness of postural alignment has been extended and facilitated. The term "release" is used in the same way that Linklater refers to one possibility of the notion of relaxation. She sees relaxation as being able to generate energy: "As unnecessary knots of tension undo, they release trapped energy into the body, creating a lively state of awareness and potential mobility" (*op. cit.*, 20). The use of movement as the medium for the release of the voice develops an awareness of the body's physical responses to vocal production. The primary response which is physically manifested is inhalation and exhalation. It is the outgoing breath from this process which is understood as the energy source for all human movement, and for voice and speech in particular. As the voice is a built-in attribute of the communicating body it follows that whether in a state of stasis or flow, whatever happens to the body affects the voice. In her publication *The Actor and His Body*, Pisk describes this concept:

> Movement and voice are naturally linked with the in- and out-going air of your breath. Reflex-actions and reflex-sounds often happen simultaneously. Change of physical condition and shape of body 'grow' different voices (1975, 10).

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The use of movement to develop an individual's vocal potential, will include the release and exploration of different voices. This is an important creative vocal tool for the actor. In an effort to develop a programme of creative movement tasks for a voice-movement programme, I observed a movement class taught by Gary Gordon in 1989. The aim of this class was to free different kinds of expression from technically skilled dancers. The idea of "breath choreography" (Gordon 1989, interview) was explored and developed. This practice illustrated most effectively the linked flow of body and breath energy. As a warm-up prior to the breath choreography the participants were given various movement tasks that required a focus on breath release. For example, they were asked to jump, run, tumble, travel, across the room, employing breath as the energy source; they were encouraged to "breath tumble" (*ibid.*) rather than inhale, then move. The emphasis was on breath giving life to the movement, not forcing it to move into a position. What Gordon explored in these initial stages was an awakening of an organic way of moving: "...the best way to feel that is to work with the breath - an emotional, natural and physical response" (*ibid.*). Added to these initial breath movements was vocalisation. In some exercises the participants were encouraged to release their names or any immediate vocal response. This process started awakening emotional responses. Through this the participants began to experience the movements, not only through the breath and the body, but also emotionally. Gordon's aim was to develop an organic and holistic attitude towards movement, and in this case dance. In an attempt to suppress the dominance of the mental faculty, which had been the problem with the performance of some of the dancers, the pace of the exercises was kept demandingly constant. One task after another was rapidly set, until the participants responded unreflectively. In a class of talented and technically skilled dancers a different quality of movement emerged[7].

The breath choreography was a sequence of movements that the participants already

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7   Their responses were based on spontaneous reaction to the stimulus. The continued pace and
     demand for immediate emotional expression was reminiscent of Growtowski's theatre
     training. In a voice class for actors, Gordon used these same principles to release the voice.
     Some participants were inhibited by this holistic approach. Lack of confidence and awareness
     of the movement potential of the body, as well as the influences of training from an older
     generation of teachers, may have contributed to this.

knew technically. After the warm up exercises the dancers were required to perform the choreography in terms of breathing rhythms. The expressiveness of the dance study was initiated by the breath. The participants experienced in their own way, a shift in emphasis from the technical awareness of the bodily movement, to a sensory and organic awareness of the expressiveness of dance.

A developed individual awareness of how the body is used as a medium of response and expression, is crucial to the re-education of physicality in vocal training. The Alexander technique, which is discussed in chapter three, has been selected to explore ways in which an individual can be made aware of the use and functioning of the body. The person is made aware that the use of the body determines the functioning of particular responses; the voice is one example. The technique is also suggested as one in which an awareness of postural alignment can be developed, which is crucial to effective vocal production. The following discussion will introduce the specific areas of body awareness which need to be developed in vocal training programmes. This development can take place through movement. The areas of bodily awareness fall loosely into two categories namely, awareness of the skeleton and awareness of the muscles.

The skeleton is the bony matter which gives the body shape. Muscles and connective tissues control the movement of this structure. All the bones of the skeleton are directly or indirectly originated from the spine. The typical spinal column is a flexible structure composed of the various groupings of vertebrae. The top seven, immediately below and supporting the head, are known as the superior cervical. Below the cervical vertebrae are the twelve thoracic bones that receive the twelve ribs. Below these are the five lumbar vertebrae which then lead into the five united sacral vertebrae. The last grouping, which is at the base of the pelvis, are the four or five fused coccygeal vertebrae (Palmer 1972, 127-128). The spine supports the most extreme top area of the body namely, the head, and ends in the pelvis, the last supporting structure for the torso. The spine is responsible for all structural movement of the torso. It is indirectly, through the clavicle and the pelvis, responsible for the motion of the outer extremities, the arms and the legs.

The spine is the support of all movement and therefore the "support of [the] breath" (Linklater *op. cit.*, 19). The efficiency of the vocal apparatus is determined by the alignment of the body. An awareness of the spine is central to this notion. For

example: if the knees are hyper-extended, the pelvis will be swung backwards and the lower lumbar region arched. This region of the back will be shortened and by way of compensation, the chest area will be thrust forward and the abdominal region extended upwards. The shoulders will be pulled backward as will be the neck. The result is that the lower lumbar region will be weakened and the abdominal muscles will be used to supply the substitute support. These muscles are then no longer free to be used in respiration. The neck, which is depressing on the laryngeal region, will restrict the potential resonance. Similarly, if the upper spine ceases in its support of the clavicle girdle and the rib cage, the head will displace forwards and the back of the neck will shorten. The chest area hollows in and the pelvis will slump forwards bringing the lower lumbar region into a concave position. The result is that the back rib muscles take over the responsibility of support, as the abdominal region is completely locked in the general downward pull of the body. The front laryngeal area is extended forward, straining the work of the larynx and pulling on the muscles linked to the lower lip. This form of unnecessary muscular strain has obvious consequences on the efficient production of the voice and speech.

The alignment of the body will determine the balanced use of the body's muscles. Any unnecessary or extraneous tension in the muscles has a negative ripple effect throughout the body. Feldenkrais says:

> It follows that any posture is acceptable in itself as long as it does not conflict with the law of nature, which is that the skeletal structure should counteract the pull of gravity, leaving the muscles free for movement. The nervous system and the frame develop together under the influence of gravity in such a way that the skeleton will hold up the body without expending energy despite the pull of gravity. If, on the other hand, the muscles have to carry out the job of the skeleton, not only do they use energy needlessly, but they are then prevented from carrying out their main function of changing the position of the body, that is, of movement (1980, 68).

An awareness of the spine develops an awareness of the body's alignment and the movement of the muscles through contraction and release. The contraction process produces a shortening of the muscle fibre and an increase in tension. This tension pulls or moves the particular structure that is required to execute a particular movement. Having done that, the contraction process is turned off by impulses from the central nervous system. Relaxation sets in, releasing the fibre to its resting

length. Human movement can be understood as the result of "neuromuscular action on the skeletal structure" (Sweigard 1974, 121). An understanding of the workings of human movement will develop a greater awareness of the essential and dynamic physicality of the body:

> The muscles supply the force, the central nervous system supplies the impulse and the pattern, and ultimately the skeletal structure moves. All three systems must work in harmony for greatest efficiency. Any concept of teaching movement which divides movement into its constituent components, except as an analytic exercise, will prove cumbersome and ineffective. A thorough knowledge of bones, their joints and ligamentous reinforcements, and their alignment for efficient support of body weight is the fundamental which can make the most significant contribution to an *understanding of movement...* (*ibid.*, 127-128).

There is a certain amount of necessary tension which occurs in the body to facilitate movement. Extraneous tension limits the total efficacy of the body. This extra tension may result from emotional strain, pressure, anxiety and false ideas about body use. This unnecessary tension is the "non-purposive, incessant contraction of the muscles" (*ibid.*, 20), which then become strained and inefficient in their normal functioning.

Contemporary vocal practitioners have developed a greater awareness of the effects of unnecessary tension on the development of vocal potential. Methodologies that "remove blocks" (Linklater *op. cit.*) and "habitual inhibitions" (McCallion *op. cit.*), address bodily tensions holistically. Linklater approaches the liberation of the voice through a developed awareness of the need to remove "blocks which are psycho-physical" (*ibid.*). A basic assumption of her approach is that:

> ...the tensions acquired through living in the world, as well as defenses, inhibitions and negative reactions to environmental influences, often diminish the efficiency of the natural voice to the point of distorted communication (*ibid.*, 1)[8].

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8   It is interesting to note that as early as 1930, Curry in writing about the problems of vocal expression when reading aloud, expressed a similar view. He said: "The Muse of Eloquence and the Muse of Liberty, it has been said, are twin sisters. A free people must be a race of speakers. The perversion or neglect of oratory has always been accompanied by the degradation of freedom" (*ibid.*, 3).

The psycho-physical nature of human tensions which Linklater addresses in her methodology implies the obvious psycho-physical nature of vocal development. Linklater reinforces this awareness by consciously employing the imagination of the individual in vocal exercises. She, like Berry (1987) and Gordon (1990), are developing ways in which vocal training is approached holistically, that is the simultaneous use and development of the energies of body/voice/intellect.

The imagination is also employed in contemporary vocal training to create working images which will assist in understanding complex physiological functions. Contemporary attitudes to the training and use of the breath have developed such images as the "root" or "centre" of the vocal energy (Berry 1975, Little 1985). This working concept of the "centre" is in direct contact with the physical energy of the breath, the emotional impulse of the feeling and the mental direction of the mind. At a workshop led by Joan Little in Grahamstown during 1985, she explained the undivided nature of centred breath:

> It is the feeling that moves the breath.
> It is the breath that moves the body (and the vocal action).
> These movements are constantly under direction from the mind
> (*ibid.*, 1).

The use of the imagination in exploring imagined tasks and concepts, is an organically emotional approach to exploring the technical aspects of vocal training. Instead of the approach being rational and intellectual, it is sensory and undivided. Imagining the centre from which all the processes of vocal release spiral out, promotes attitudes towards the centrality and unity of the individual's expression. Berry (1975) uses phrases such as "root the breath down to the centre"; "let the breath touch down deeply to the centre" (*ibid.*, 34). Whilst Linklater uses "feeling-centre, breathing-centre, energy-centre, centre of the torso" (*op. cit.*, 135). She asks the student to "imagine there is a pool of vibrations in the lower half of the torso" (*ibid.*, 36). Of this pool of vibrations she says:

> "...you will be looking for a more precise and sensitive touch of sound. This involves a specific picture of the diaphragm as the most central and initial point of connection between the breath and the sound. Try to focus not only on the diaphragm, but the centre point of the diaphragm. You cannot feel the diaphragm, but by picturing it you can sensitize the mind's connection with sound (*ibid.*, 37).

In some breathing exercises Linklater asks the individual to imagine the diaphragm is "a trampoline slung from the bottom edges of the ribs". "Picture the sound as a little person bouncing up and down in the middle of the trampoline" (*ibid.*, 134). Besides reinforcing the centrality of human sound she, like Berry, uses the working concept of the imagined centre because of the complex processes that are not easily felt. The actual movement of the diaphragm cannot be felt, only associated movements such as those of the ribs and abdomen.

The imagination is also employed as a freeing process. In her exercises for awareness of the spine, Linklater (*op. cit.*) asks the student to raise the arms above the head focusing the attention on the finger tips, allowing them to "float to the ceiling" (*ibid.*, 20). The individual is then asked to let the wrists collapse, the elbows, the arms and so on until the body through natural gravity rolls down. When building the spine up again the image is that of "a castle of nursery blocks one on top of the other" (*ibid.*). The concentration is on the vertebrae, no excessive use of muscles, everything floating as though "in a stream of upward-moving energy" (*ibid.*). The result of this freedom is the sensation of an "upright headless torso" (*ibid.*, 23). The further result is that the individual has not rationalised the physical processes separately, but has felt sensations of the movement and through this sensory awareness, has developed a greater knowledge of the self.

The human voice is capable of producing many tones, qualities, a certain range and pitch. The actor's imagination should be employed to explore these processes creatively not only technically. Such a methodology supports the belief in the indivisible nature of the mind and the body. It promotes the expressive wholeness of the performer. The tones of the voice, for example, can be explored freely through colour stimulation; qualities, through imagined life situations; range and pitch, through images of landscapes, spaces, and occupations (*ibid.*, 80-81). Range in particular can be freed through action images; through setting the actor an imagined goal or asking him\her to paint an entire vocal scene or event. Imagination is the medium through which the voice is constantly kept in contact with the emotional impulse. This impulse then shapes the voice rather than inhibits it. For the actor, voice work is then associated with creativity and the imagination, in a focused and explorative manner.

The energy source for the development of voice and speech is to be found in

movement. The alliance between vocal energy and the energy of movement is natural and indivisible. Vocal training is holistic, creative and individual if approached as an integration of these energies. This combination challenges the assumption, commonly held, that voice and movement are separate skills in the training of the actor and should be developed as such. The integrated approach to training the performer develops a balanced and creative combination of skills. Such a balance develops an individual awareness of how to use, and not abuse, the body and it's expressive attributes.

Chapter Two:
A brief historical overview
of voice training.

The argument for physicality in vocal training programmes should be assessed in the context of prevalent approaches to voice training. These approaches have their roots in elocution; elocution is the basis of separatist attitudes, which have in the past denied training the voice as an expressive attribute of the body. The influence of these attitudes is still present, as certain contemporary voice practitioners continue to question the need to develop holistic and integrated approaches to vocal training[9].

During the eighteenth century in England, the term "elocution" was used to refer to "the just and graceful management of the voice, countenance and gesture in speaking" (Jolly 1987, 29). This definition of the term refers to the art of expressive vocal delivery, as opposed to earlier techniques of delivery which concentrated on displaying the "stylistic arrangement" (*ibid.*) of a speech; the Ciceronian sense of the term. The shift in emphasis during the eighteenth century from a delivery of style to the expressive qualities of delivery, was due to the influence of certain French writers who explored the art of oratory. They proposed that the art of persuasive and effective communication included the use of facial expression and gesture and not only the singular display of language skills. This theory was accepted by orators, laying the foundations for greater bodily use in communication and for the stress to be on the whole physical embodiment of performance rather than style alone.

The most important of these French writers, according to Jolly (*op. cit.*) was Michel Le Faucheur. His original writings published in 1657 motivated the need to include a study of pronunciation and gesture in the art of oratory. These writings, originally designed for the use of preachers and legal representatives at the Bar, were

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9 Examples of such practitioners are recorded at the end of this chapter, and in the survey presented in chapter four.

incorporated into actor training during the eighteenth century (Jolly *op. cit.*, Pickering 1983). These French writers also developed an awareness of the need to codify the pronunciation and gesture of the particular language being used. In England, this led to a surge of writing and encoding. Writers not only recorded the use of expressive gesture with speech, for example "John Mason's 1748 *Essay on Elocution*" (Jolly *op. cit.*, 30), but also recorded rules of pronunciation which would set a standard for spoken English. Jolly (*ibid.*) lists some of these writers as Henley, Swift and Sheridan.[10] In paying particular attention to Sheridan, he records the following:

> In his 1762 Lectures on Elocution, Sheridan elaborated a body of sophisticated elocutionary lore which dealt with voice, countenance and gesture - all three of which, in eighteenth-century terms, were considered subject to modes of 'pronunciation.' ...Sheridan deals with the specifically phonological issues of articulation, pronunciation, accent, emphasis, pauses and stops, as well as pitch and management of the voice, tones and gesture (*ibid.*, 31).

The elocutionary movement of the eighteenth century was responsible for laying down the ground rules for "the purest and correctest language" (*ibid.*, 30). Van Dijk (1983) suggests that establishing rules for correct pronunciation may have been an "early attempt to establish a uniform English pronunciation on the stage, where, at the end of the eighteenth century, many varieties of pronunciation and dialect were prevalent" (*ibid.*, 39). This suggestion reinforces eighteenth-century neo-classical attitudes to stage performance which attempted to unify "all elements of style" (*ibid.*, 40) that is, to make everything on the stage similarly grand, in keeping with the grandeur of eighteenth-century stage productions. Van Dijk explains this: "The actor's endeavour to pronounce words as correctly as possible may have been part of [the] classical outlook, where to be correct was to be virtuous, in costume and setting, as well as pronunciation" (*ibid.*, 39). These skills set aside stage speech from everyday speaking, enhancing the grandeur of both the elaborate theatrical experience and the social occasion. There was an important need to encode the

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10   The elocutionist Thomas Sheridan is the father of the well known playwright Richard
      Brinsley; *The Rivals* and *The School for Scandal*. To avoid confusion, as Thomas Sheridan
      was also an actor, he will be referred to as Sheridan, and his son as R.B.Sheridan.

correct manner of pronunciation and articulation for the stage, so eighteenth-century elocutionists recorded detailed investigations of the phonetics of language. By the end of the first decade Sheridan published an examination of the formation of English sounds. Jolly (*op. cit.*) records:

> ...his investigation deals with nine simple sounds for vowels (contained in the words h*a*t, h*a*te, h*e*re, n*o*te, pr*o*ve, b*e*t, f*i*t, c*u*b) and nineteen for consonants (including ef, eg, ek, el, em, en, ep, er, es, et, ev, ez, elh, eth, esh, ezh, ing) and...a careful analysis of syllabification (*ibid.*, 33).

Sheridan explored the actions of the organs of articulation when making these sounds. He proposed that these phonetic descriptions of articulation became the medium through which correctly spoken English in the theatre was taught. As phonetics is the science of speech-sound making, Sheridan's descriptions of correct articulation were based on sound production. Early speech skills were therefore based on listening to what was the established correct sound, and then recreating that sound using the descriptions of articulatory movement. These recordings of articulatory movement were later given scientific explanation, which resulted in phonetics being regarded as a true science. Articulatory movement became a scientific way of recreating the required sound.

Of interest is the fact that the eighteenth and nineteenth centuries were significant periods in the development of industrialization. Kumar (1986) defines this term and the characteristics of an industrial society:

> Industrialisation became the generic term encompassing all the major changes in the movement to 'the industrial society'; and the industrial society came to be identified as the distinctive type of *modern* society, incorporating therefore common features which went well beyond those of a simply economic and technological character. Industrialization meant, certainly, the transformation of the productive forces of society through the application of a machine technology and the factory system; but it also meant urbanization, secularization, the 'rationalization' of thought, institutions and behaviour, the individualization of consciousness and conduct, and a host of other changes in family life, politics, and culture (*op. cit.*, 55).

It is not within the scope of this study to explore the in-depth effects of industrialization on the arts. Of importance is an awareness of the influence of rationalisation which was a feature of thought which manifested itself during the

second half of the nineteenth century. This practice "sought a scientific explanation for every aspect of behaviour" (Pickering *op. cit.*, 10). In the context of voice training, the invention of Garcia's Laryngoscope in 1854 secured the scientific base for the study of the voice. Not only did this scientific invention render the study of the voice serious and worthwhile, it also invited a new social awareness of the voice, thus shifting the training of the voice from an exclusive acting accomplishment to a skill desired by the increasingly successful middle class. Scientists, whose previous interest in theatre had been as audience members, now had vested interests in the research into speech production. The foundations for scientific enquiry had been established in the eighteenth century with extensive investigations into the phonetics of speech and how the organs of articulation move to create speech. By the end of the nineteenth century initial enquiries into the making of sounds were scientifically, as well as physiologically, substantiated. The result was a distribution of a large number of text books, advocating different methods of elocutionary practice, "derived from physiological and mechanical data of the voice in action" (*ibid.*). The speech teachers, who also increased in number, were teaching from these books and were either employing the assistance of people from scientific backgrounds or had some scientific background themselves. Two examples of this are: Manuel Garcia, who taught in the early half of the nineteenth century and was not only a singing teacher, but also a medical doctor; and Elsie Fogerty, who started teaching in the late nineteenth century and enlisted the help of Doctors Hubert and Aikin.

Through the involvement and publications of the scientists, society was made aware of how speech could be corrected scientifically. Implied is a broader recognition of the worthiness of the study of speech and increased credibility for an activity usually only associated with the frowned-upon theatrical world. Pickering records:

> A new interest in the function of the vocal cords [through the Laryngoscope] led to a stream of books by surgeons. This interest in part created and was in part generated by a belief that elocution in general and recitation in particular were proper and desirable accomplishments for a new middle class to whom the industrial revolution had brought increased affluence and leisure. Whereas the Stage itself was regarded with great suspicion as a respectable activity, especially for women, the practice of elocution, like singing, became to be an important part of any scheme of self-improvement (*op. cit.*, 10).

Elocution in the nineteenth century became a social industry as well as a theatre

industry, based upon the standards of middle class aspiration and inherent mediocrity. Middle-class scientists and teachers and a large middle-class consumer market set the standards of elocution. The inclusion of the scientist into speech training, coupled with the notion of correct speech being a necessary social accomplishment for the newly formed affluent middle class, manifested itself in the relationship between the theatre and society. Some actors, as well as society people, became quite obsessive about their voices in the nineteenth century, and because audience members were inevitably taking speech lessons, it followed naturally that criticism of theatre performances centred around criticism of vocal delivery. The theatre became the place of speech improvement as well as correction, as both audience and actor showed off newly-acquired speech skills. Improvement in speech standards was considered in terms of middle-class perceptions of court pronunciation known as "the King's English" (van Dijk *op. cit.*, 39). Yet whilst the theatre looked to the court for standards, van Dijk records how the court looked to the theatre for the same (*ibid.*). The standards of the court risked being influenced by mediocre standards or whimsical and theatrical speech habits.[11] The society therefore played significant roles in establishing the standards of good speech which were used in the practice of elocution.

The training of the actor's body is determined by the image of the body in society; the voice will be a product of this image. The body during the eighteenth century was characterised by the exaggeration of certain features. During the first decade of the eighteenth century, hooped skirts were introduced into the fashion codes of women; these hoops grew in diameter and changed in shape from round to oval. The exaggerated side-spread of the hips increased throughout the century. The neckline plunged further emphasising the bosom and exaggerating the sexuality of women. The style in which women clothed themselves lent itself to magnification and enlargement. These features of magnification and enlargement increased throughout the century and were reflected in the theatre through images of larger bodies, larger gestures and larger voices. The qualities of the characters on the stage were also presented as larger than life. Examples of this can be seen in the characters from

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11   Van Dijk records an amusing account of the Prince of Wales asking John Kemble to correct his pronunciation of 'oblige', which Kemble did: 'Obleege' (1983, 39).

R.B.Sheridan's *The School for Scandal* (1777); the hypocrisy of Joseph Surface, the slyness of Mr Snake, the maliciousness of Sir Benjamin Backbite.

The theatres of this time had large auditoriums with deep and wide balconies. Theatres of the previous Restoration Age had favoured elaborate architecture, scenery and stage machinery, all of which detracted from the performer. This situation prevailed well into the nineteenth century. The acting style of the eighteenth century was therefore generally forced and bold in an effort to overcome the physical obstacles in the theatres. A further reason for this is the expansion of the audience to include the emergent middle class who gradually dominated society during the course of the nineteenth century. In England this development was slower than in France. The French had experienced the Revolution of 1789 which set into motion the processes by which a greater social equality could be achieved; the English by comparison were just beginning.

Towards the end of the century efforts were made to establish a natural way of delivery. The eighteenth-century actor David Garrick is described as "an actor of great versatility and natural delivery in a day of ranting and chanting" (Macgowan and Melnitz 1955, 242). Through his acting style, he tried to establish a more natural style of vocal delivery on the stage. Russell (1973), in discussing the language used in *The School For Scandal* (R.B.Sheridan), gives a clear indication of what was expected of the actor at the time:

> As with Restoration Comedy, the characters generally make their points with polished epigrams and witty descriptions, and the idealized conversations that take place make every phrase seem spontaneous yet sparkling and apt. ...Although it shows the English language at a polished peak of conversational brilliance, it also reflects a certain aspect of the society that is artificial, somewhat tarnished , and rather useless. Certainly the polished prose in much of this play demands a precise and exact technique of delivery... (*ibid.*, 351).

This was Garrick's particular talent; the ability to deliver his lines exactly and precisely, without allowing the sentimental and moralizing passions of the character types to dominate his delivery. Garrick's style was an achievement of "histrionic effects through a cold and deliberate use of the mind, instead of giving way to the domination of an emotion" (*ibid.*). His preparation for performance included mental planning of delivery and initial rehearsals of the words as if they were every day speech.

Working at the same time as Garrick was the Irish actor Thomas Sheridan who became the elocutionist.[12] Sheridan, like Garrick, had been trained in the Betterton style of acting. Betterton had recorded his style in a manual on acting, the first of its kind during the seventeenth century. From the middle of the eighteenth century, Sheridan emerged as the leading theorist of the elocutionary movement in England. He, like Garrick, was concerned with the achievement of vocal effects through the rational calculation of accent, emphasis, pauses, stops, syllabic stress and awareness of metre. He contributed significantly to the teaching of pronunciation and the establishment of "a proper method of instruction" (Jolly *op. cit.*, 31). In the service of establishing such a methodology, Sheridan conducted an extensive phonetic analysis of English vowels and consonants which have already been discussed. By the end of the century, he had established a sophisticated elocutionary lore which, along with tuition in gesture, was practised in most theatre companies.

With the revival of touring companies during the eighteenth century, institutionalised-based training was unable to establish itself. Actors learned their trade whilst touring. The result was a mixture of styles and dialects. Actors working for companies resident in provincial theatres learned the company style. It was in such companies that actors may have been influenced by the practices of Garrick and Sheridan.

The nineteenth century was characterised by increasing urbanisation and industrialisation. The cities became flooded with workers from the lower classes, and the audiences changed from the middle class majority of the late eighteenth century, to a "truly mass audience" (Russell *op. cit.*, 362) by the middle of the nineteenth century. The size of the theatre auditorium expanded further, until major theatres in large cities seated some three thousand spectators or more. The style of acting was forced to become bolder and vocal delivery became declamatory. Van Dijk records how the voice of the nineteenth-century actor John Kemble "became more highly pitched, if not shrill, in order to project to the larger theatres" (1983, 29). The audiences of the nineteenth century were not only larger but noisier,

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12   The playwright R.B.Sheridan had obviously been brought up in a theatrical environment. His
      father's work in elocution was well established by the time R.B.Sheridan had started writing
      plays.

demanding greater projection from the actors. The actors understood projection as "the elevation of the voice to a high key" (*ibid.*), so they not only seemed to scream at the audience, but the resultant inflexibility was insensitive to the fluctuations of the mood of the text. The damage to their voices must have been extreme. In keeping with these disadvantages that the audience and auditorium created, the language used in plays during this period tended towards heavy involved speeches that suited the weight and style of declamation; possibly the only style capable of reaching the audience. The images contained in the speeches were obvious and "laboured" (*ibid.*, 371) in an attempt to reach the furthest corners of the auditorium. The slow ponderousness of the declamatory style, coupled with the shrill tones and high inflections, must have made voice work on the stage extremely demanding, and vocally damaging.

The restrictions imposed on the body by clothing were also disadvantageous to the actor. Again the female body is used as the paradigm. At the turn of the nineteenth century there was a move towards relative simplicity with the disappearance of the hooped skirt; but by the middle of the century another exaggerated image in the form of the corset had appeared. This tightlacing which severely constricted the female waistline to the point of unimaginable hour-glass measurements, inhibited physical activity. In a current study of the image of the body, anthropologist Turner suggests "the corset was an emblem of the leisure class" (1984, 197). Implied is the suggestion of the leisured class needing to establish itself among and above the rising affluent middle class. What characterises training practices of the eighteenth and nineteenth centuries is this notion of restricted and exaggerated bodies. The result was that the body was not able to support the voice. Consequently the actor only understood projection in terms of an adjustment to pitch rather than a greater use of resonance and breathing.

The nineteenth-century actor training was particularly influenced by the work of Manuel and Gustave Garcia, and Francois Delsarte. Manuel Garcia, a singing teacher and medical doctor, invented the Laryngoscope, the effects of which have been previously mentioned. From the middle of the century, Garcia took up a teaching post at the Royal Academy of Music in London, and it was from here that he established a course in elocution. The training of the singing voice and the elocution of the spoken voice were conducted through a similar series of rules.

Rules of tone, pitch, volume and resonance apply to both disciplines. Garcia Jnr. taught elocution at the Royal College of Music towards the end of the century, as well as the London Academy and the Guildhall. It is from these and other music schools that drama schools were established and twentieth-century practitioners emerged. For example: the Royal Academy of Music initiated the Rose Bruford College of Speech and Drama; the London Academy of Music extended into the London Academy of Music and Dramatic Art (LAMDA).

In the mid-nineteenth century, Garcia Snr. established a course and a system of actor training in England which was based on the work of Francois Delsarte. Delsarte's methodology was a series of "rules of elocution and gesture which had mathematical precision" (*ibid.*). Such a system echoed eighteenth-century attitudes towards rationalisation. Delsarte, in aiming for a unity between "the body, the voice, and the spirit" (*ibid.*) used gesture, which he considered to be the most powerful dramatic tool. The combined and mechanically formulated use of gesture with the voice, created for Delsarte what he believed to be "natural delivery" (*ibid.*). The use of gesture externally rationalised the internal nature of the soul. At a time when the belief in the dualism of the mind and the body still prevailed, this might have been considered a movement towards unity. Yet the teaching still contradicted the basic principle that the mind and the body do need to be taught to work simultaneously. The Garcia/Delsarte teaching in gesture was a significant part of the primary aim, which was to train the actor "to produce beauty of body and voice and only then to apply these to dramatic situations" (Pickering 1983, 14). Such was the focus of actor training in the nineteenth century, to produce the "body and voice beautiful" (Barnett 1980, Pickering *op. cit.*). This resulted in the presentation on stage of images of elegance, which were like works of art. The actor's body was framed by the elaborate proscenium arch there-by creating the picture-like image and maximising its beauty and aesthetic worth. Training of the actor's body at this time did not allow for individual interpretations of the character's physical persona. The physical statements of the character was seen in terms of classical poses or diagrams of gesture, which were superimposed on the actor. Consequently the expressive potential of the body of the actor was never developed to contribute creatively to the physicalisation of the play. The body, as the support for the voice, was static, imposed upon and restricted. Movement on the stage was taught in terms of attitudes and poses. These attitudes were learnt by observing and imitating classical

paintings or statues which, during this period of neo-classicism, were considered the "perfect images of pose" (Hughes 1987, 81). The statues and paintings were studied in terms of weight balance, symmetry and asymmetry. They were studied as mathematical calculations which would provide rules for the correct sculpturing of the body on stage. Hughes records the following:

> 'In the passion of Grief, by a villainous Habit, he throws his Body out of the Line, his head projected, and his Body drawn tottering after.' The 'Line' may have been a technical term for the imaginary perpendicular which should connect the head and the weight-bearing foot (*ibid.*, 83).

Similarly facial expressions were studied in terms of a set of prescribed emotions, which were considered the soul of the physical attitudes, and were recorded by philosophers such as Descartes and Lebrun. These recordings were set down in a series of diagrams which actors studied and imitated. In a theatre unaccustomed to subtext, these passions were never regarded as internal motivating forces, but rather studied facial gesture which complemented the body's attitude. Implied in this understanding are dualist attitudes which prevailed at this time.

The primary importance of tonal and vocal beauty placed emphasis on the creation of vowels and consonants to establish "beautifully" rounded and clear speech. The elocutionary rules of the previous century were further extended in a desire to establish a standard of English speech that could be termed "beautiful". The notion of a series of rules for training, is reflected in the precision of classicism which the nineteenth-century theatre adopted in performance. This period in theatre history, before the rise of realism in the latter decades of the century, was based on specific attitudes towards accuracy, rules and beauty. Actor training was influenced by separatist attitudes; the body was separate from the voice; the ideal voice was separate from the individual; the voice and the body were separate from the dramatic text. It is these attitudes which twentieth-century practitioners have attempted to address.

In summing up the image of the body, the views of some current scholars will be discussed. Because the theatre experience is social, it is understood as reflective of the norms and practices of the society of which it is a part. The society will establish issues, accepted practices and codes of behaviour, all of which are reflected in the theatrical experience (Schechner 1985, Steadman 1984). The image of the body in

society, which Benthall and Polhemus regard as "the foremost of all metaphors for a society's perception of itself" (1975, 10), will be reflected in the image of the body on the stage. In *The Body as a Medium of Expression* (*op. cit.*), Polhemus records the *"learnt* nature of bodily expression and the *variable* nature of bodily expression" (*ibid.*, 16). Of particular importance to this discussion is the notion of "learnt" bodily expression which, according to Mauss, Polhemus, Douglas (*ibid.*) and Turner (1984), should be understood within the social context. Mauss puts forward the theory that "the techniques of the body are learnt: that they are social and cultural phenomena and not 'natural'. (*ibid.*, 16). Polhemus's notion of "social bodies" (1975, 1978) refers to the concept of "socialization (enculteration)" (1978, 21) as that which determines how the body is and how it is seen to be. Douglas states that "the body communicates information for and from the social system in which it is a part" (Benthall and Polhemus *op. cit.*, 28). Every individual in society is therefore a "social body" (*ibid.*). What people wear, how they move and behave, how they reveal or hide the body, are social learnings. These learnings provide the individual with a socio-cultural identity without which the person cannot function within the society, because he\she does not have a recognised social identity based on accepted social norms of behaviour. The "socialization" of the body provides the individual with the essential tools for "being-in-the-world" (Turner *op. cit.*, 1). The person, once socialised, then becomes an "agent" or "actor" (*ibid.*) of the society, revealing through the body, social location, social belief and social values. The corsets of the middle to late nineteenth century, for example, reflected a very different body, to that of the twentieth-century's jeans and t-shirts. The former image is one restriction, in keeping with the moral norm of a "loose body reflected loose morals" (Turner 1984, 197). The latter image is of the body sexually and socially liberated.

Elsie Fogerty was one of the earliest twentieth-century practitioners who attempted to address these separatist attitudes. She was an outspoken opponent of the Garcia/Delsarte elocutionary practice and in particular opposed their emphasis on the "voice beautiful", which implied the separation of the voice from the individual. She was fascinated with the problems of language and diction in the theatre and was disapproving of the high pitched declamatory approach. This dissatisfaction led her to investigate a possible means whereby the individual's voice "could be projected with maximum natural resonance" (Pickering *op. cit.*, 19).

Fogerty had a limited knowledge of the physiology of the voice, although new scientific methods of research were increasing the body of knowledge of this topic. Bearing this in mind, she enlisted the help of two Doctors namely, Hulbert and Aikin. The former had taught, between the years 1904 and 1906, "Acoustics, Diction and Physical Culture" (*ibid.*) at the Guildhall School of Music. Dr Aikin published *The Voice* (1910, 1956 ed. Rumsey), which became the standard work on the subject for the first half of the century. In this publication, Aikin details the physiology of the voice and sound. He discusses several issues of the production of sound, the most important of which were resonance, breathing and breath control for the stage. On breathing he proposed the following:

> Under ordinary circumstances the breath is taken in easily and then let out quickly, after which follows a pause; but in speaking and singing the reverse is the case, for the breath must be taken in quickly and put out gradually. ...It is also desirable that a considerable reserve of air be kept in the lungs, for much of the volume of the voice, as well as the control, is lost when the muscles of the chest are too much relaxed (Rumsey ed. 1956, 24).

This concept of controlled breathing was adopted by voice teachers during the first half of the century and referred to as "rib reserve" breathing (Thurburn 1939, Bruford 1948, Turner; Morrison ed. 1950). It was understood as a breathing technique for projected speech on the stage and implied a method of breathing separate from everyday breathing methods; repose and passive are examples.[13]

Aikin and Fogerty also developed the resonator scale, which is a scale of vowel sounds used to explore the different registers of the voice and the qualities of resonance. The training of the resonator was advocated as vitally important: "so that we may develop its powers and control its use, and thus make its influence on the note as perfect as possible" (Turner *op. cit.*, 24). This was the foundation of her teaching practice; the development of natural resonance. This foundation established the change of emphasis in voice training during the twentieth century. Previously the emphasis had been on the correct articulation of vowels and consonants, stress,

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13 Reposeful is the breathing pattern used by the individual when asleep. Passive is used most of the time.

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accent, emphasis and pause. This delivery was executed perfectly, but was shrill and forced in it's projection on the stage. The development of the natural power of the voice was effectively ignored by the Victorian obsession to "classify observable phenomena" (Pickering *op. cit.*, 23). Scientific elocutionary methods of sound production were developed as a method of sound production, rather than the natural resonating power of the voice. Fogerty introduced an approach that dealt with the means of achieving a well resonated voice, which would, through developed natural potential, be capable of effective projection. Although there is evidence of elocutionary methods in her speech teaching (Fogerty 1933), her approach addressed the need to liberate the natural qualities of the individual voice.

Of significance to this discussion is that F. Matthias Alexander was developing his technique of body use and re-education at the beginning of the twentieth century. This technique had an enormous effect on voice training because it re-examined and re-educated contemporary notions of postural alignment. This will be discussed in detail in the following chapter. Elsie Fogerty's efforts to discover a means-whereby the natural resonators of the voice could be used for projected speech, coincided with Alexander's application in body use of the concept: a "means-whereby". In *Man's Supreme Inheritance* (1916) Alexander recorded his use of this concept. In discussing the re-education of the individual through conscious guidance and control, he stated "that in every case the 'means whereby' rather than the 'end' should be held in mind" (Alexander, 189). In other words the individual should not focus on singularly gaining an end, but rather on the means whereby the end product is achieved. His use of the term, like Fogerty's, relates to the process rather than to the product.

This research has been unable to record evidence of Fogerty having ever met or worked with Alexander. There is little doubt though, that she would not have been ignorant of his teachings and writings, as he continued to publish until 1943 and she died in 1945. Furthermore, several of her followers and students in later years were influenced by Alexander, which suggests an awareness of his practices in a circle very close to Fogerty. One such follower was Iris Warren, who in turn taught Kristin Linklater. Linklater became a student of the Alexander Technique in an attempt to understand further, the psycho-physical nature of voice work which Warren had established.

Contemporary practitioners have addressed the need to develop vocal training processes as the means of achieving effective vocal products. The training of the voice is the process and speech the product. The belief is that, once the voice is "freed " (Linklater 1976) or "uninhibited" (McCallion 1989), speech or the speaking voice, is liberated and can be developed. Dualist or separatist attitudes towards process and product are not upheld. Linklater, as an example of such a practitioner, integrates the imagination in vocal exercises to ensure the development of total expression. Although certain speech training methods are still phonetically based (Colson 1973, Luck 1975), it is seldom approached as a skill separate from the development of the processes of voice; for example good body use, breathing and resonance. Contemporary speech training is understood as effective every day speech, rather than a social grace or a skill which only a selected few can acquire. In the publications of Turner (1950 Morrison ed.) and Berry (1975)[14], several portions of text are provided with speech exercises, so that technical skill which is learned can be applied to naturally spoken and rapid speech. Berry, more so than Turner, upholds this philosophy in her vocal training programmes for actors. In her most recent publication, *The Actor and His Text* (1987), she has instructed the development of language and speech skills through the text. She provides skills with which the actor can individually interpret and explore the energies of sounds, words, phrases and passages. Her teaching, as the title implies, is for the actor and never separates the actor from the text. In contrast with eighteenth-century practices which superimposed correct speech onto the text, Berry starts with the text recognising it as the source of vocal expression.

The basic premise of twentieth-century practitioners is that every individual has a voice capable of effective communication and has a right to develop that potential (Berry 1975, Linklater *op. cit.*, McCallion 1989). This is a significant shift from the nineteenth-century's social implications of the prescribed and learned "beautiful voice". Contemporary vocal training has moved towards addressing the separation

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14 Berry and Linklater are examples of practitioners who are non-elitist in their vocal training
    techniques. Their approaches are a reaction against approaches such as that of Turner, which
    intended to only serve the actor. This thesis has examined voice training for the actor, out of a
    need for focus and a concentration on intensive skills training. This selection of focus has not
    been intended to imply elitism.

of the voice from the speaker by re-educating into vocal training, the notion of individual physicality. The body, in keeping with twentieth-century notions of democracy and social and sexual liberation, is becoming an integral part of voice training. It is the individual statement which was denied in the practices of the previous centuries. The physical energy of the whole body is being used to free and enhance the vocal energy of the voice, in attempts towards developing holistic approaches to vocal training. Examples of this are the practices of; "sound-movement" (Linklater *op. cit.*, 207), "verbal dynamics" (Burniston and Bell 1972) and "voice-movement" (Gordon 1989). The breath, which is central to the physicality of the individual, is recognised in contemporary practice as central to the development of vocal potential. Furthermore, in the teaching of breath control for projected speech, practitioners have developed the technique of controlling the exhalation of everyday passive breathing; "central breathing" (Berry 1975). Such a technique reinforces the notion that natural processes should be developed, rather than the learning of a separate skill which seems divorced from everyday functioning.

Much contemporary theatre is, to some extent, the off-spring of a contemporary movement towards naturalism and believability.[15] This is reflected in vocal training programmes which aim to develop the natural potential of the individual performer. The historical perspective presented in this chapter, has suggested some of the misconceptions and problematic issues in early vocal training. In the development of vocal training programmes suited to the needs of contemporary theatre forms, practitioners have had to address inherited problems. Dualist attitudes implied in training the voice separately from the body, have to some extent survived. These provide the motivation for the need to re-educate the notion of physicality in vocal training programmes.

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15   These are only two aspects of the diversity of twentieth-century stage theories and practices.

Chapter Three: The Alexander technique in vocal training.

The Alexander technique is suggested as a training in body use and awareness which can be used to complement the re-education of physicality in vocal training. Whilst there are other techniques which could be examined, for example those of Ida Rolf or Moshe Feldenkrais, my selection is motivated by experiential awareness of this technique.[16] Through a developed awareness, I have been able to apply effectively the Alexander principle of *"Use Affects Functioning"* (Barlow 1975, 11), to vocal training.

The re-education of physicality in vocal training is based upon the development of an holistic approach. The principles of the Alexander technique are taught through psycho-physical re-education. Because such a practice is holistic it can be applied to the re-education of physicality. The Alexander technique does not try to control actual physical functioning, as some Yoga systems do for example. Alexander believed that the body knows how to function naturally and will do so as long as the individual does not interfere with this functioning. Alexander's principles of body use are developed through psycho-physical re-education, to increase individual awareness of the notion of mind\body interference. Such an awareness develops an understanding of how the interference of the individual with one part of the body, affects the functioning of the whole; a notion which is important to developing vocal potential (McCallion 1989). The Alexander teacher shows the pupil what is ineffective use of the body; the teacher then guides the pupil, through psycho-physical re-education, towards an awareness of how such body use may be prevented.

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16   In a discussion with Gary Gordon he spoke of the developments in dance scholarship, of the argument for "knowledge *about* and knowledge *in*" dance forms. My experience with the Alexander technique as a pupil has been of significant assistance to me both academically and in the application of the technique to vocal training. As I am not a trained Alexander teacher, my use of the technique in voice teaching is a reference to it's principles; my experiential awareness of these principles has assisted this teaching.

The Alexander technique is a training in body use which has been medically and scientifically verified (Barlow 1975, Dart 1947; 1970, Jones 1972, Jones *et. al.* 1959); and accredited as a leading educational philosophy (Dewey 1932; 1964). The technique was developed from the experiences of an actor, whose vocal problems were solved when he investigated the functioning of his body. The need to develop a technique which trained the body to operate at it's optimum, under circumstances of strain and potential mis-use, was satisfied after years of self-exploration. Frederick Matthias Alexander was born in Tasmania in 1869. As a child he had been interested in acting, elocution and dramatic recitals which were in those days the principle form of entertainment, both publicly and at private social functions. As he grew up, he took part in amateur dramatic performances on a regular basis and also taught himself to play the violin. In both these accomplishments he was considered to have had a natural aptitude. At the age of twenty he left for Melbourne to follow a career and professional training in the theatre.

Within six months he had organised to take lessons in elocution, dramatic art and violin from the best teachers. He also organised his own amateur dramatic company and through the production of these plays, his recitals, concerts and private engagements, Alexander became well known as an actor. For some time though, Alexander had been plagued by a hoarseness in his voice during performance. He recorded his problem:

> I began to have trouble with my throat and vocal cords, and not long after I was told by my friends that when I was reciting my breathing was audible, and that they could hear me (as they put it) 'gasping' and 'sucking in air' through my mouth (1932, 6).

Despite the best training and advice from the top elocution teachers, and consultations with the best doctors, no one could stop this condition from worsening. Doctors prescribed inhalants and periods of rest before performances, but the spells of hoarseness became so frequent that Alexander began to fear that his voice would not survive a performance. Lloyd (1986) records:

> Before one particularly important engagement, he consulted his doctor about how to prevent the recurrence of his hoarseness and was advised to speak as little as possible for two weeks before the performance. In spite of carrying out these instructions by the end of the performance he had lost his voice (*ibid.*, 15).

The deterioration of his voice became so extreme that, in a consultation with his doctor, they both agreed that there must be something wrong with the way in which he was using his voice. Prescribed medical solutions were not helping the problem. Alexander, although seemingly at a dead end, had in fact reached a major turning point. As his doctor was unable to tell him how to improve the use of his voice, he decided to search for the solution himself. He began by observing himself in a mirror, to ascertain what he did with himself when reciting. He observed his manner of speaking in conversation and compared this observation with that of his manner of speaking in performance. From his observations, he noted three unusual things which noticeably happened when he recited: "I tended to pull back the head, depress the larynx and suck in breath in such a way as to produce a gasping sound" (*ibid.*, 9). Having made this observation he then re-observed himself during ordinary speaking and noticed that these three tendencies occurred to a lesser degree in this situation. These tendencies were, by implication, every day habits of use which were exaggerated during performance because of the need to project the voice. In fact what Alexander had exaggerated was mis-use, the result of which was hoarseness and unsatisfactory breath intake. These negative factors increased with constant and forced mis-use. The hoarser his voice became the less he trusted it's ability and efficacy, and the more he forced it.

Alexander assumed that pulling back his head, depressing his larynx and sucking in his breath were the root causes of his vocal difficulties and that if the condition were to improve, he would have to deal with these problems. He started to work on the most obvious sources of speech, the breath intake and the larynx. He discovered that, although he knew he did not want to gulp air audibly, he was unable to stop this habit. In the same way he could not stop the habit of depressing on his larynx. Consequently he turned his attention to his head and discovered, after several months of experimentation and observation, that he could "to some extent prevent the pulling back of the head" (*ibid.*, 11). Unlike the breath and the larynx he could exert his will over the position of his head. He realised that when he willingly stopped pulling his head back as he spoke, he stopped depressing the larynx and gasping for air on breath intake. Having realised the control he had over the position of his head, he experimented further and discovered that pulling the head too far forward also resulted in depressing the larynx and led to hoarseness. After six months of observation and experimentation Alexander realised the importance of

head balance on the functioning of the breath and the larynx. He came to realise that any use of the head and the neck which was associated with the depression of the larynx, "was also associated with a tendency to lift the chest and shorten the stature" (*ibid.*, 13):

> This new piece of evidence suggested that the functioning of the organs of speech was influenced by my manner of using the whole torso, and that the pulling of the head back and down was not, as I had presumed, merely a misuse of the specific parts concerned, but one that was inseparably bound up with a misuse of other mechanisms which involved the act of shortening the stature (*ibid.*).

Alexander's discoveries had already laid the foundations for him to develop conscious control over use of the body. Such control would prevent mis-use of the body and ensure optimum functioning. He experimented with the conscious lengthening of the stature and monitored the effects on his voice of both a lengthened and a shortened stature. He concluded that "the best conditions of my larynx and vocal mechanisms and the least tendency to hoarseness were associated with a lengthening of the stature" (*ibid.*, 14). In practice Alexander continued to shorten far more than lengthen. This, he observed, was because of a tendency towards pulling his head downwards, as he put his head forwards in what he believed to be the act of lengthening. After further experimentation he found that to counteract the downward effect of the head going forward, he needed to concentrate on the head also going upward. Alexander found that, despite his concentration on the lengthening of the spine, he still tended to lift his chest and arch the spine when reciting. In an effort to counteract this, he focused on widening the back at the same time as lengthening the stature.

The success of his efforts so far was that he was able to prevent his head from pulling back and down, which was of benefit to his vocal organs and stopped him gasping for air. He had taught himself to lead with his head forward and up without lifting his chest and narrowing his back. Yet this practice could not be maintained over long periods especially during recitation. He found it difficult to stop the old familiar habits from creeping back into his performance. As the act of recitation was linked to the accompanying activities of bodily gesture and movement, he turned to a further examination of the physicality of his performance technique. Using the mirror again, he noticed that his use of his head, neck, larynx, voice and breathing

organs also involved undue muscle tension in the legs, feet and toes. Part of his drama training would account for this mis-use; he had been told to "Take hold of the floor with your feet" (*ibid.*, 18), and thought he had interpreted the working image satisfactorily. His observation now told him that he was bending his toes downwards and arching his feet unduly, throwing his weight on to the outside aspect of the feet, and there-by arching his back to compensate for the imbalanced weight distribution. This use he discovered, was habitually brought into play every-time he was required to recite, and was a well established habit of mis-use in his performance technique.

Similarly, the mis-direction of his head and neck habitually came into play as a result of a decision to use his voice. He developed an awareness of the need for a reliable control over the initial reaction to the stimulus, because the initial reaction was habitually unreliable and one of bodily mis-use. This he determined could be done through inhibition, which would momentarily stop the source of the unsatisfactory response to reciting, and allow for a new direction of use to be given. The new direction of use would be reliable, based on a re-educated awareness of the body's natural and effective use. A satisfactory reaction to the stimulus to use his voice, would be achieved through the employment of conscious and reasoned direction. The efficacy of this process took a long time to achieve. No matter how reasoned the reaction and direction, the new manner of use which was being consciously projected, was simultaneously rejected in practice. Alexander found that there was no clear dividing line between the unreasoned and reasoned direction of the self. Whilst he was successful in employing reasoning up to a point, he could not actually carry the directions out on his body. Old familiar habits, in the effort to achieve the result, took over at the last stage of the attempted process of conscious control.

Alexander's focus in developing the conscious control over the use of the body, turned to an examination of the "means" whereby directions could be implemented, rather than a concentration on the "end" result of speaking. The Alexander technique uses the phrase the "means-whereby" to indicate the following:

> ...the reasoned means to the gaining of an end. These "means" include the inhibition of the habitual use of the mechanisms of the body and the conscious projection of new directions... (*ibid.*, 27).

Alexander prevented himself from focusing on the end product of speaking, by

concentrating on the process through which the goal is achieved. He inhibited the habitual reaction to speaking by not thinking about the end result of speaking. In this way he thought about the process of speech development, and this concentration gave him time to employ the psycho-physical directions of effective body use. During his experiments with the processes of the "means-whereby", Alexander developed a technique of respiratory re-education, which is not only an example of his developed notion of the "means-whereby", but also complemented later developments in breathing techniques for projected speech.

When Alexander was investigating his own vocal problems one of the symptoms of mis-use which he needed to examine, was the gasping for breath. His investigations revealed that the gasping effect was a result of the depressed larynx and the wrong attitude to breathing in general. Alexander was trained in rib-reserve which uses the movements of the ribs and the diaphragm separately. To control exhalation, the rib-reserve technique advocates that the breath be "emitted by means of the rising diaphragm alone" (Turner 1977, 15). The ribs, which have been maintained in the elevated position, are then allowed to collapse when the breath is completely exhaled or as a form of reserve to satisfy an extra need. The main problems associated with early twentieth-century attitudes towards breathing is that they were essentially "end-gaining" attitudes. "End-gaining" according to Alexander is, "the habit of working for ends, targets, goals, results, without considering the means: without ensuring that the means we employ won't produce too many harmful by-products" (Barlow 1975, 160). In describing the rib-reserve technique, Turner refers to consequences associated with the technique which seem to be "end-gaining" rather than useful; they may be interpreted as displays of achievement rather than useful by-products. For example, the observation: "That the ribs are expanded may be sensed by the tighter fit of one's clothing" (*op. cit.*, 17), could become a goal in this breathing technique, which Turner probably never intended. With reference to the aim of the rib expansion Alexander commented:

> The striking feature in those who have practised customary breathing exercises is an undue lateral expansion of the lower ribs, ... This excessive expansion gives an undue width in the lower part of the chest, and there are thousands of young girls who present quite a matronly appearance in consequence. The breathing exercises imparted by teachers of singing are particularly effective in bringing about this undesirable and harmful condition (1916, 330).

The "gasping" which Alexander suffered from was linked to his bodily mis-use, and his mis-direction of response; gasping for air was a response to the goal to achieve as much breath as possible for projected speech:

> It is a well known fact, but one greatly to be regretted, that many teachers of breathing and physical exercises actually tell the pupils that, in order to get the increased air-supply they must "sniff" [or "gasp"] (*ibid.*, 325).

Breathing is a natural function of the body in response to the law of atmospheric pressure. Rather than superimpose the forced supply of air, the voice student should become aware of the natural response pattern of the breathing mechanism, and where necessary, bring that under conscious control. One of the procedures of respiratory re-education which Alexander developed was the "whispered ah" (1907 in Alexander 1916).[17] This has often been used as a breathing exercise (Jones 1976, McCallion 1989) and a vocal exercise (Murdock 1988). The procedure was originally used by Alexander as an extremely effective device for demonstrating the role of inhibition in breathing and voice production. For voice training, the "whispered ah" is an effective preparation for bringing several of the major functions together. It helps release the jaw, ensuring that the mouth and pharynx are both well opened for adequate resonance. In releasing the jaw, the tongue is also released, thus preparing it for the work of articulation. Finally the breath is brought into effective use.

The technique Alexander developed is one of re-educating body use. This re-education is psycho-physical in its teaching of individual control over the use of the body. From his experiments Alexander achieved the following: "My conscious, reasoning direction was at last dominating the unreasoning, instinctive direction associated with my unsatisfactory habitual use of myself" (*ibid.*, 36). His technique is a re-education of the

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17 Briefly the directions of this exercise are as follows: in response to the stimulus to take in breath, direct the neck to be free, direction of the head forward and up, and the back to lengthen and widen; the mouth should be closed with the tongue resting it's tip behind the lower front teeth; before breath is exhaled, smile, as this action of the facial muscles will help the jaw not to pull back; the mouth is then opened, by allowing the lower jaw to move forward and down mostly through gravity. With the jaw fully open and without force, the open vowel "ah" is then breathed out or "whispered".

psycho-physical processes involved in human bodily functioning. It upholds attitudes towards holistic approaches to the body and understands the re-education of human bodily use at the centre of all human functioning.

The technique is not a training in posture; it is a training in efficient body use. One of Alexander's earliest and most important stages in his investigation into the malfunctioning of his own body, was the realisation of "...the close connexion [sic] that exists between use and functioning" (Alexander 1932, 12). The way in which the body is used, efficiently or inefficiently, determines how the body functions as a whole organism. Barlow (1963, 1975) classifies human body use into four categories of movement and operation. Firstly, bodily use in everyday mechanical actions which move the body and move objects, for example: moving a fork, a pen, a chair, or a bicycle. Secondly, the use of the body in postures and positions: sitting, standing, lying down, kneeling and all related variations. Thirdly, forms of use in the communication process:

> In addition to the obvious ways of communicating by word and gesture, we find in human behaviour tiny signs which - unconsciously, automatically, and whether we like it or not - transmit a certain mood, quite contrary to our intention of expressing something (Barlow 1963, 16).

Such "tiny signs" take the form of mannerisms, gestures or grimaces. Fourthly, Barlow records the use of the body in activities which are partly voluntary and partly involuntary. For example: breathing and eating. Efficient body use is achieved, according to Alexander, by the: "Co-ordinated use of the organism [which establishes a] satisfactory control of a complex mechanism" (Alexander 1923, 16). Any deviation from this coordinated use constitutes mis-use.

Mis-use results, according to Barlow, from the concentration on "a purpose" (*op. cit.*, 16). Jones (1976) and Gelb (1981) both agree on the goal-orientated nature of mis-use and it's characteristic singular dimension. This results in an imbalance in the overall co-ordination of the body. An example of this would be lifting, which is a mechanical action, a posture variation, and should be co-ordinated with breathing, a voluntary/involuntary activity. Efficient use of the body, when performing this activity would be a co-ordination of all these categories of body use. Mis-use for example, would be an imbalanced use of the posture resulting in an extra strain on

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the activities of the arms. Excessive tensing of the arms, shoulders and neck is used to compensate for a collapsed back and stiffened legs. Mis-use of the body means an incorrect distribution of energy exertion.

Mis-use often implies a set of values or attitudes towards the body (Alexander 1923;1932, Barlow 1963, Fagg 1968). The individual adopts a certain position or manner-of-use because, consciously or unconsciously, it is considered valuable. In *Man's Supreme Inheritance* (1916) and *Constructive Conscious Control of the Individual* (1923), Alexander traces the changing values of man's body use within the context of a developing industrialised and rationalised society. Prior to what Alexander terms as "civilisation" or "man's civilised state" (1923, 7), he understands the individual as evolving through "savage stages" (*ibid.*, 6). These stages of development valued the use of the body in terms of self-preservation:

> ...the animal and the savage were forced, day by day, to make use of their mechanisms in securing the food and drink necessary to their existence and in attempting to thwart the designs of their common enemies (*ibid.*, 7).

At this stage in development, demands made on the individual were satisfactorily met by subconscious and instinctive processes. The environment, Alexander proposed, rarely changed and so the individual's needs remained practically the same. He paints the picture of a relatively static and slowly evolving society in which the individual operated "quite slowly" (*ibid.*, 8). The main distinction that Alexander draws between "savage" and "civilised" societies is the pace of operations and this pace is determined by rational and technological advancement:

> ... the civilised state called for a higher and still higher standard in the development of [a person's] potentialities. Here his most trying problem arose from the fact that his environment continued to change at an increasingly rapid pace, and that these changes brought about a more rapid development of new needs. The response to the stimuli resulting from these new needs had to be a much quicker response than any in his previous experience, for progress in growth and development under the civilizing plan involved ever-increasing needs and called for a correspondingly increasing speed in the matter of response to stimuli. Furthermore - and this is all-important - the demands thus made upon the psycho-physical processes, generally called mental processes, which were comparatively unused in his case, were destined to increase very rapidly, whilst the demands made upon the psycho-physical processes, generally called physical processes, which were highly developed in his case, were destined to decrease... (ibid.).

The individual's functioning, according to Alexander, became more rationalised and less instinctive. Advancements in technology and machinery developed attitudes towards utilising the body for materialistic productivity. Instinctive responses, for example the activities of gaining food, were substituted by mechanical processes and responses. The individual in a technologically advanced society also needs to respond faster to the demanding pace. Such a response is goal-orientated and characterised by a lack of awareness of the body as an organism which needs to be used efficiently, and not abused in the achievement of the goal. The industrialisation of a society is characterised by functioning towards mass output. The required pace to achieve this output does not allow for the emphasis to be placed on the means of achieving, but rather on the achievement alone. The body is consciously used to gain an end without regard for the quality of use.

Socially the body is often mis-used in the way in which the society has valued a particular pose or posture. Slumping in the sitting posture or over arching the lower spine when walking to attract attention, may be seen as such examples. There is great value in conforming to group patterns, because conformity is interpreted as acceptance and identity. These "conformity deformities" (Barlow 1963, 18) are hard to avoid; it is difficult to be with a group of people who are all slumping without doing the same. Such "deformities" would be easier to avoid if the individual realised they were harmful to the general functioning of the body. Social posing is a form of rationally chosen mis-use and may become habitual.

The manner in which the individual uses the body, whether it be a spontaneous intelligent choice or habitual , determines the functioning of the organism. An effective manner of use will exert a positive influence on the general functioning of the body. Such an influence, if constant, will continually raise the standard of the organism's functioning. On the other hand, mis-use will exert a negative influence on the general functioning. If this becomes a constant influence, it will harmfully affect the organism's functioning and lower the standard of efficient operation. Alexander discusses the nature of the influence of use on the body's functioning:

> In estimating the extent of this influence of use upon functioning and reaction, the vital point to consider is whether it is spasmodic or constant. If by chance it is spasmodic, it will have a comparatively slight effect upon the nature of the functioning, but if, as is usually the case, it is constant, its effect upon functioning will tend as time goes on to grow stronger and stronger (1942, 9).

It is the constant influence of use on the body, rational or habitual, which is of the utmost importance to the teachings of this technique. Constant mis-use encourages the development of habitual mal-functioning. Alexander defines habit as "the manifestation of a constant" (*ibid.*, 10) implying that the faculty of conscious choice submerges into a constant and familiar practice. Bierman (1974) supports this notion by suggesting that "habits are conscious actions [which] slip below the level of consciousness" (*ibid.*, 24), in so doing, these actions become accepted and established practices.

The Alexander technique aims at "re-educating" (Alexander 1916) habitual mis-use of the body by bringing inefficient, stressful, or uneconomical use back to the level of consciousness, and then consciously altering it. The pupil is guided by the teacher to develop a comprehension of their mis-use and then taught through conscious control to alter this mis-use. The teacher does not manipulate the individual's body out of the state of mis-use and tension. Manipulation implies moving the body of a passive recipient who, at the end of the experience, has had no conscious involvement in the actual process of change. This is not an ideal state of learning, given that the aim of the technique is to develop a re-educated sensory awareness of the use of the body and the processes of change needed to maintain effective use. This awareness, which needs to be accurately appreciated by the senses, is guided by the teacher, who gently manoeuvres the body into better use.

When pupils take a course in the Alexander technique, they are guided by the teacher in the body use of standing, sitting, lying down, lifting, writing, walking and other every day bodily functions. The method of guidance is hands-on, as verbal descriptions of malfunction are not enough to help change a manner of use. The teacher's hands gently and mechanically guide the pupils' bodies through the experience of their misuse towards the most efficient organisation of the body. The hands of the teacher, for example, will free the neck by a gentle upward and forward pressure and widen the shoulders by a horizontal easing apart sensation of the shoulder blades. It is a sensory experience of efficient use into which pupils are guided by the teacher. Through this, a pupil's sensory perceptions are "re-educated" (*ibid.*) to be reliable. This process of sensory "re-education" teaches pupils a reliable sense of effective use, which will facilitate their conscious control over the body's manner of use.

Alexander noted in his own bodily investigations, and later those of his pupils, that the individual's sensory interpretation is not always reliable. This state is attributed to one's manner of use, which tends to be responsible for determining the state of feeling. For example, mis-use will misconceive notions of what feels "right". In *Constructive Conscious Control of the Individual* (1923), Alexander says that the term "sensory appreciation" is used in his technique to include:

> ...all sensory experiences which are conveyed through all the channels of sight, hearing, touch, feeling, equilibrium, movement, etc., and which are responsible for psycho-physical action and reaction throughout the organism (*ibid.*, 34).

He suggests that the human organism should be seen as an "animate machine" (*ibid.*), and in order for this "machine" to be reliable, it relies upon the standard of its "controlling, propelling, motor and other mechanisms" (*ibid.*, 35). This standard needs to be efficient and is gauged in terms of a reliable sensory perception. Gelb (*op. cit.*) interprets Alexander's "sensory appreciation" as a specific reference to the kinaesthetic sense. This particular sense "provides us with information on our weight, position and movement" (*ibid.*, 54). These qualities refer directly to the individual in action. Both Gelb (*ibid.*) and Frederick (1977), use Alexander's phrase "debauched kinaesthesia" (Alexander 1923, 107) to refer to: "feelings-of-rightness in action, which are untrustworthy because of the constant negative effects of habitual mis-use on the action and in turn the feeling" (Frederick, 6). They argue, that in this state of "debauched kinaesthesia", the controlling sensory mechanism is affected in the following manner:

> It cannot make correct judgement about use because it can only make these judgements within the framework of a use which is faulty to begin with - so what 'feels right' is not necessarily right, and any new 'correct' use will in fact, at first, feel wrong (*ibid.*).

The aim is to re-educate sensory appreciation; to replace the familiar habitual sensory interpretation with one that is more reliable. This re-education, based on proven effective use, will ensure that information received from the sensory mechanism is not distorted, and that as a result of this, the individual's idea of how the organism is functioning is clearer. In discussing the need to re-educate unreliable sensory appreciation, Alexander says the following:

> In this connexion [sic] I have found in my professional work that too often a person will consider a psycho-physical experience to be quite

satisfactory, when I, as an expert, know it to be in reality unsatisfactory. In such a case, the supposedly satisfactory experience is a delusive and harmful experience, on the part of the person concerned, of feeling and thinking he is right when he is actually wrong. In fact, the experience is really an unsatisfactory one, but he does not know it; and so, when later he becomes dissatisfied, he does not attribute his dissatisfaction to his own psycho-physical experiences, but to other people, surroundings, 'something wrong somewhere', always believing the cause to be without instead of within the organism (1923, 25).

A significant contribution which the Alexander technique can make to vocal training, is the re-education of the body as "the locus of perception" (Gelb *op. cit.*, 54). The constant emphasis on the reliability of sensory appreciation or perception, makes this a technique which does not encourage the student to try and feel what is happening in the process of change. Here the word "feel" is being used in its general sensory sense, as in to "feel" the texture of a garment. The experience of trying to feel what is happening, for example trying to feel whether or not the neck is free, results in the student trying to will the process and to make it "feel right". The technique develops the notion of "feeling-knowing" by re-educating the individual's knowing of the body experientially; never encouraging the person to cerebrally explore feeling (see footnote 5).

Adjustments to the use of the body are made with experiential knowledge and an understanding of the co-ordinated uses of the muscles. Such understanding is consciously extended "on the complete acceptance of the hypothesis that each and every movement can be consciously directed and controlled" (Alexander 1916, 198). The fundamental principle of the Alexander technique is that the first step in the re-education and re-adjustment of the individual should be taken in the direction of consciousness. The process of re-education with which the Alexander technique concerns itself, is the conscious establishment of four principles:

(1) The conception of the movement required;
(2) The inhibition of erroneous preconceived ideas which sub-consciously suggest the manner in which the movement or series of movements should be performed;
(3) The new and conscious mental orders which will set in motion the muscular mechanism essential to the correct performance of the action;
(4) The movements (contractions and expansions) of the muscles which carry out the mental orders (*ibid.*, 200).

The first step towards establishing efficient body use is understanding the

inaccuracies of the present use. Through careful observation of chosen activities, for example, rising from a sitting position to stand or bending down to lift an item, the Alexander teacher can establish what facilitates and what impedes an individual's functioning. Through a series of guided and experimental moments the teacher will make the pupil aware of the same. Having established what is inefficient in the performance of an activity, the second step is prevention. Alexander proposed that the use of "inhibition" could do this. He does not however use the words "inhibit" or "inhibition" in the Freudian sense of suppression (Barlow 1975, Bierman 1978, Barlow 1975, Westfeldt 1964), but rather in the "physiological sense" (Westfeldt *op. cit.*, 147):

> The inhibitory is that function of the brain which says yes or no to the idea of a given activity. "Inhibition, as we do it," he [Alexander] once said to his students, "is not suppression but volition. It enables us to do what we have decided we want to do" (*ibid.*).

In *The Resurrection of the Body*, Maisel (1969) records Alexander's definition of the fundamental difference between inhibition as suppression and inhibition as volition. The difference is that with the former:

> ...the process of inhibition is *forced* upon the pupil [and] this means that his desire is thwarted in consequence of compliance with a command from an outside authority, and this could account for the disturbed emotional conditions associated with what is known as suppression (*ibid.*, 57-58).

Whereas the latter process of inhibition is "general and preventive" (*ibid.*, 58) and is stimulated "from within" (*ibid.*) by the individual. The use of inhibition in the Alexander technique allows the pupil to consciously stop the practice of mis-use and employ effective use; it is "the act of refusing to respond to the primary desire to gain an 'end'" (*ibid.*). Inhibition in the Alexander technique, is the conscious moment when the pupil stops the response to gain an end, and rationally employs the primary control which will direct the means where-by the end is achieved. Frederick (*op. cit.*) says that:

> In application, inhibition is an hiatus, a space, between stimulus and response, a saying 'no' to the habitual reaction so that the desired direction can be seen -or, more simply, so that a choice can be made (*ibid.*, 7).

The third stage in the re-education of body use, is concerned with the rational choice and selection of procedures which are implemented in the fourth stage, which is: "the muscular employment and operation of these selected means" (Carrington,W. *op. cit.*, 14). These procedures are the directions of the primary control (Alexander 1916, 55) namely, the relationship between the neck, the head and the back. In "Human Movement" Carrington, D (1977) considers how four-legged animals move. With the head being at the front of the body, the usual direction of movement is forwards. This forward movement of the head exerts a forward pull on the spine; which in turn pulls the front legs forwards, which in turn activates the hind legs to come forward and under the animal:

> So, as the animal moves, the spine is constantly being stretched, or, as you might say, "lengthened". But the movement begins at the head with the neck being "freed" -i.e., as the neck muscles are released the head falls a fraction, pulled by gravity, and is then directed along the line of the spine (*ibid.*, 9).

These basic mechanisms of movement are the same in human beings. Any animal moves by using gravity to overcome inertia and muscles to overcome the pull of gravity. In the case of the "well-balanced" (*ibid.*) human being, the centre of gravity is "slightly forward of the condyles of the skull - the joint between the head and neck" (*ibid.*). This means that the pull of gravity allows the human head to fall slightly forward releasing the neck muscles. Being two-legged and not four-legged, the direction of the head is upwards, along the length of the spine. This direction allows the human spine to stretch, or lengthen, as the individual moves forward. The movement of the legs in motion, and the forward direction of the knees, "gives the two-way stretch on the spine in the same way as in the [four-legged] animal" (*ibid.*). This muscular stretch counteracts the pull of gravity and facilitates movement. The teaching of the primary control is concerned with "correcting balance and encouraging the anti-gravity mechanism of the body" (*ibid.*, 11).

The Alexander technique does not uphold the philosophical tradition of Cartesian dualism, the essence of which is the distinction between physical and mental phenomena. The problem with such a distinction is that it can not explain interaction between "mental" activity and "physical" activity, as the "mental" and the "physical" are understood to be separate and diverse entities. Phenomenological thought counteracts dualism by understanding that there is no split between what is

classified as "mental" action or "physical" action. The underlying principle of this thought is mind-body unity and it is this concept which influenced Alexander's discoveries:

> I must admit that when I began my investigation, I, in common with most people, conceived of "body" and "mind" as separate parts of the whole organism, and consequently believed that human ills, difficulties and shortcomings could be classified as either "mental" or "physical" and dealt with on specifically "mental" or specifically "physical" lines. My practical experiences, however, led me to abandon this point of view and readers of my books will be aware that the technique described to them is based on the opposite conception, namely, that it is *impossible* to separate "mental" and "physical" processes in any form of human activity (1932, 3).

The Alexander technique teaches that the functioning of the living being is based upon the use of the "indivisible unity of the human organism" (*ibid.*, 5). Alexander refers to this unity as the "self" (*ibid.*), in an attempt to alleviate the divisive and separatist attitudes implied in "mind and body". The philosopher and educationist Dewey, who worked with Alexander, also testifies to the necessity of understanding the human organism as an integrated whole. He uses phrases such as: "wholeness of operation" and "unity of action" (Dewey 1964, 11), when discussing human behaviour. The expression "mind-body" is used to reflect the oneness of the human organism (*ibid.*). Dewey argues that from the point of view of action, reference to the dualist notion of "mind and body" should represent an emphasis rather than a traditional barrier. For example, the actions of digestion, reproduction and locomotion are conspicuously physical in their manifestation, whilst hoping, desiring and thinking distinctly mental; the difference being "one of degree and emphasis" (*ibid.*). The difference should not be understood as a sharp barrier assigning one set of actions exclusively to body and the other exclusively to mind. Dewey and Alexander avoid perpetuating the notion of dualism with references to the notion of a "psycho-physical unity" (Alexander 1942, 5). By implication, any workings or activities of the human organism are psycho-physical: "I use the term psycho-physical activity to indicate all human manifestations, and psycho-physical mechanism to indicate the instrument which makes these manifestations possible" (*ibid.*).The re-education of the use of the psycho-physical mechanism, through psycho-physical means, will ensure the optimal functioning of the human organism. The emphasis placed on the re-education of the individual's awareness of the use

and functioning of their being, is considered to be the primary motivation for including this technique into vocal training programmes. The use of the human organism will influence the specific functioning of the voice and the re-education of body use is the Alexander technique's primary aim. McCallion (1989) says:

> Most of the things which go wrong with the voice do not begin with the vocal organs. ...most people actively interfere with the way their voices should work, and that interference begins with the way they use the body as a whole. If we can stop that interference the voice will work well (*ibid.*, ii).[18]

It is important for the individual to be aware of body use when developing the potential of the voice. The impulse to communicate vocally comes from and uses the whole person, so for this to be efficient and effective there should be no form of interference. Murdock (1988) suggests that the production of vocal potential, and care of the professional voice is intrinsically linked "with care of one's sensory awareness, and care of the body balance and co-ordination" (*ibid.*, 10).

The Alexander technique is not intended to teach an idea of "good posture". It re-educates the individual in the use of the body. The Alexander technique does not promote statements of body postures which are valued by the behaviours or fashions of the society. Rather the technique re-educates body efficiency. Dart (1947) proposes that the Alexander technique teaches the individual "the attainment of *poise*" (*ibid.*, 74):

> *Poise* is a body state achieved only by care-free education of the body for balance and the maintenance of balance. *Poise* is a character of repose or rest in the good body whether it is in the relatively static positions of lying, sitting or standing, or is in progressive motion during the activities of life's daily routine or of sport (*ibid.*, 76).

Poise is the graceful and co-ordinated use of the body. Such a state implies the easy movement of the whole physical frame, and the unhampered ability to adjust the position of specific parts, without disturbing the easy balance of the whole. The state of poise is unstressful. Implied is a bodily use of the least possible friction. The attainment of poise, depends on the achievement and maintenance of body-balance

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18 Linklater's notion of "blocks" (1976), is another example of current perspectives.

which is achieved by the balanced co-ordination of muscles.

For the purposes of this discussion a brief examination of the muscles surrounding the larynx is of interest. This area is of obvious importance to vocal production. There are several muscles attached to the larynx which can be divided into two groups, namely intrinsic and extrinsic. The intrinsic muscles are generally understood as those associated with the "valvular action of the vocal folds..." (Palmer 1972, 108). The extrinsic muscles are divided into those that are above the hyoid (the suprahyoids), and those that are below the hyoid (infrahyoids). These muscles control the movement of the hyoid bone, which is basically the foundation structure of the larynx: "movement of the hyoid is translated almost directly into movement of the laryngeal structures" (*ibid.*, 105). The suprahyoid group of muscles consist of those which pass downwards from the skull to the hyoid. The infrahyoids are those that originate in the clavicle and pass upwards along the side of the neck to the base of the hyoid. Murdock (1988) describes the larynx as being, "suspended in a sort of 'cat's cradle' of muscles" (*ibid.*, 11). The shape and efficiency of this suspension is determined by the position of the head on the neck (Murdock *op. cit.*, Jones 1972).

If, for example, the speaker were to pull the head back and down, the muscles which suspend the larynx would be unable to function efficiently as a suspensory mechanism. They would be short and cramped in the front throat region, and extended and tensed along the back of the neck. The muscles would be out of balance and the suspensory mechanism understood to be "in a state of collapse" (Murdock *op. cit.*, 11). This undue strain caused by the unnatural crowding of the laryngeal area "is undoubtedly the greatest factor in the causation of throat troubles, especially where professional voice-users are concerned" (Alexander 1916, 326). In the cramped throat area, the muscles (intrinsic) which normally exert their proper "stretch reflex" (Murdock *op. cit.*, Jones *op. cit.*) on the vocal cords, would be unable to lengthen and close the vocal cords as effectively as they can do. The result is that the production of vocal tone would be weakened at the outset of the process; the cords themselves would not be in an efficient vibratory state, and the resonating chamber not fully able to produce maximum amplification. This cramped situation causes extra tension and inflexibility in the tongue and lower jaw. Research into the balance of the head on the total co-ordination of the body (Jones *et. al.* 1959), has

corroborated that head balance determines the level of efficient balance and movement of the human being. Specifically for voice production, both Jones (1972) and Lloyd (1986) record experimental studies which prove that the balance of the head determines the quality of voice production.

The Alexander technique teaches the use of the primary controls as a method of co-ordinating and balancing the body. For the performer, the most important result of the applied use of the primary control, is the attainment of physical freedom. In directing the neck to be free, the head will go forward and upward, the back will lengthen and widen, and the full extent of the body will be liberated, balanced, and co-ordinated. The individual's awareness of the centrality of the spine is developed, as it connects the top structures with those at the base of the body, making it central to the working and alignment of the entire body.

Most contemporary voice teachers uphold the process-orientated philosophy that to unlock the voice, the individual first needs to unlock the body (Linklater 1976, McCallion 1989, Murdock 1988,). When the body is unlocked from habitual tension and mis-use, it is then free to be trained in whatever skill is required. This state of bodily freedom should be maintained to ensure the release of the performer's integrated expression. As the voice and the body are totally interdependent, they cannot be separated in vocal training; the holistic approach of the Alexander technique complements this notion. The teachings of this technique, for example: the primary control; the psycho-physical nature of interference; the "means-whereby" "end-gaining" is prevented; the re-education of sensory awareness, are attitudes to the use of the self which can be employed to develop a re-education of physicality in vocal training. The development of holistic approaches to vocal training underlies the need to re-educate physicality; the Alexander technique has been re-educating physicality for almost a century, and by implication can contribute in many ways.

Actor training needs to reflect the unified, complex and communicating nature of the human being. What might seem to be isolated areas of training, for example voice lessons, movement classes, acting technique classes, should ideally be integrated lessons which reflect the indivisibility of the communicating whole. The ultimate aim of actor training is the development of the individual as a creative, sensitive and responsive actor. It is the belief of this study that such an aim would be

achieved if the individual's sensory awareness of "self" (Alexander 1932) was reliable and at the base of all learning. Such awareness is made reliable through the re-education of physiologically sound body-usage. The student actor's sensory awareness of the body determines the extent to which that person is tuned-in with the functioning and ability of the body and how the body is trained and developed. The re-education of sensory awareness, as taught by the Alexander technique, guides the person towards understanding the use and potential of the self. This technique deals with the individual's experience of a unified self: "... a real sight of the self as head, body and emotions which are interrelated and organic, rather than compartmentalised" (Lee 1988, 16).

The aim of acting is to convey meaning. Stanislavsky expresses this as "... the creation of the inner life of a human spirit and its expression in artistic form" (Magarshack 1947, 52). Meaning is conveyed through characterisation and for this to be achieved the actor needs to be in a particular state of creativity which Stanislavsky calls the "creative state" or the state of "I am". In this state:

> the actor can observe the interaction of relaxation, concentration and imagination. The actor, when relaxed, is able to concentrate on the messages of his imagination, which will then transform him physically and mentally into its images (Lee *op.cit.*, 16).

The Alexander technique, in re-educating the individual's sensory awareness, also provides the person with an understanding of the nature of tension and relaxation and essentially the notion of "body-balance" (Dart 1947, 76). This achievement of balance is crucial to the nature of performance; balance between knowing what the actor controls and what the actor leaves alone, balance between the actors own imagination and the rehearsed outer form, balance in the interaction between the actor and fellow actors in performance. The lack of unnecessary tension or friction facilitates an effective creative state or process in the actor.

Actors most usually work under the pressure of fear, both in rehearsal and performance. Such a pressure usually makes them want to "do", resulting in excessive and often useless activity. The actor is highly vulnerable to becoming an "end-gainer" in an effort to deliver the goods of performance. In this regard, one particular actor recorded the benefits of a course in the Alexander technique:

> The Technique showed me the value of stopping and waiting, even for

ten seconds, in which time the imagination can begin to work. Actors often think they feel better if they are 'doing something' and this habit needs to be recognised as tension. The technique offers us a means of standing back from the hyper-active self (Lee *op. cit.*, 18).

Being aware of the balance of the body; correcting it's tensions and misuse, is achieved through a reliable sensory awareness. The technique in actor training should not be viewed as a peripheral relaxation technique but rather as a complement to the creative process. The technique can be used to assist the performer in achieving a creative state in which the messages of the imagination can be both liberated and received.

Chapter Four:
Towards an investigation of voice training in South Africa.

An investigation into voice training in South Africa needs to question compartmentalised actor training. The form of theatre for which the actor is being trained also needs to be considered. In South Africa there are a variety of theatre forms which have been widely documented and discussed (Coplan 1983, Hauptfleish 1988, Sole 1987, Steadman 1985, Kavanagh 1988). In keeping with the changing socio-political landscape, all these theatre forms need to be adapted to emergent needs and attitudes. This has obvious consequences for current and future performance training, as South African theatre in the nineties attempts to contribute significantly, towards an expression and development of what Masekela calls a "peoples culture", that is:

> ...[a] culture that represents the most progressive cultural elements as the nation evolves towards liberation. It therefore views both English and Afrikaans-based cultures as a valid part of the whole rich tapestry of South African culture - but a part; not the sun around which the whole cultural universe revolves (1990, 4).

Implied in her proposal is the establishment of cultural equality, recognition and democracy. This demands a South African cultural statement which draws on the diversity of its heritage and allows equal space and recognition for all. It is a cultural statement which comes from the South African people and is not imported from overseas. It appears that the form of theatre which is presently emerging as the most important and suitable to fulfil these needs, is the workshop theatre.

This form of theatre has manifested itself in schools, in urban and rural productions, in protest and educative theatre of the industrial unions, in student dramas at universities and technical colleges, in performing arts councils and community theatre groups. The creative process of the workshop theatre is democratic, communal and participatory. These productions are characterised by "energy and

passion" (Steadman, *The Star* TONIGHT! June 7 1990, 6) which is brought to the process by the participants, as they explore and seek solutions to the issues in question. The personal investment of each individual to the communal process emerges as the motivating force in these productions. The workshop theatre is not text-based. The participants do not start with a final script. They start with a problem and through collective group effort and contribution arrive at some form of script which poses a solution to the problem (Hlatshwayo 1989; Coplan 1983). The final script may be written up by one person, but the characteristics of the creative process which are collective participatory forms of expression, make this form of theatre dynamic and communal. The performance activity is "grown from the 'bottom up' as an organic, autonomous effort of the masses to formulate and dramatize community concerns..." (Coplan, 3). The final performance strives to reach "a democratic solution of the people" (Coplan *ibid.*, 243); namely the participants both on and off the stage. The performance is "characterised by images for the re-shaping and re-ordering of aspects of the culture" (Coplan 1985, 243) in an effort to propose a solution. The need to re-shape and re-order motivates the performance activity and it is through re-shaping and re-ordering that the final performance is created. Schechner says that the workshop facilitates these processes because "it is a way of playing around with reality, a means of examining behaviour by re-ordering, exaggerating, fragmenting, recombining and adumbrating it" (in Epskamp 1987, 69).

According to Steadman the workshop theatre is seen in South Africa as "popular theatre" (1981, 2), and can thus be understood as a form of "proletarian theatre... dedicating itself to the depiction of life" (*ibid.*). Because of this constant examination of politics and ideology "it is a theatre which exemplifies how performance in southern Africa can reflect change and continuity in relation to the complexities of the social structure" (*ibid.*). It is often presented through a mixture of languages, second and the vernacular, and most importantly is not aimed at the publishing market but at a cosmopolitan audience. As Steadman says; "The concern is not so much with literariness as with theatricalism - where images speak more than words, and where action is symbolic and evocative" (*ibid.*). Contemporary realities in this form of theatre are expressed dynamically and not as literary images; they are physicalisations of meaningful events and issues. An example is the production *Kinross - The '84 Mining Disaster* (1990), which was a highly skilled

physical performance, captivating the audience by it's precision, clarity and creativity. The subject matter of the actual disaster was secondary to the skills of mime and sound creation, which brought this workshopped production to life, and made it a totally visual and physical experience. At the 1990 Edinburgh Festival this production was acclaimed in *The Scotsman*:

> The two actors Pearson and Grealy do not tell the story - they sound it
> and move it and feel it.
> They sweat it and stretch it.
> (quoted by MacLiam in *The Star* TONIGHT! September 13 1990, 1)

The importance placed on the physicality in this critical comment is significant; it is the integration of the emotions, the expressions and the senses of the performers which is acclaimed.

Initial attempts at investigating contemporary voice training in South Africa took the form of a questionnaire. A sample is included in appendix A. Questionnaires were sent to voice tutors at nine university drama departments. The survey was intentionally conducted on a small scale because its function was an initial enquiry into certain areas of research. The questionnaire aimed at ascertaining attitudes to the teaching of voice through a combined voice-movement methodology. It attempted to survey the extent to which this teaching practice was already in use. In addition, the questionnaire enquired after knowledge and application of the Alexander technique in voice training.

Questionnaires were returned from all nine universities but not from all the tutors. There was a sixty percent return from tutors. A possible reason for the outstanding forty percent was that the questionnaire was presented in English only. A larger scale investigation would need to address this language problem in order to explore cross cultural attitudes more successfully. The use of more languages expand the field of research significantly and generate a variety of new issues. A further problem with the questionnaire was that it investigated too many diverse areas. This resulted in too much information not directly related to the needs of this thesis. Important specific issues such as the form of theatre for which the department saw itself as a training ground, and the exact application of the Alexander technique, were not adequately dealt with by the questionnaire. The researcher was required to do several personal or telephone interviews to clarify these issues.

There were differences in perceptions of the types of theatre for which the actor is presently being trained. Despite these differences all returned questionnaires supported the notion that vocal training should be dynamic rather than static. The questionnaire defined movement as an unstructured activity in terms of style, goal orientated and individual in quality. In terms of this definition all returned questionnaires stated that movement was used in training the processes of voice production. The areas of training provided by the questionnaire were broadly divided into the processes of voice, for example breathing and resonance, and the processes of speech, for example vowel and consonant formation and language stress. Half the returns did not use any extra bodily movement in the training or exploration of speech processes. With the exception of two returned questionnaires, every response indicated the use in vocal training of the principles of the Alexander technique.

In an interview (29 September 1990), Yvonne Banning discussed the "notion of the communal", as being the theatre for which actors should be trained. She saw the School of Dramatic Art at the University of the Witwatersrand as a training ground for "the communal rather than the individual, the elite, the special" (ibid.). Implied is a sense of the theatre catering for different kinds of people who display a variety of skills. For this reason the department's practical work is mostly in the form of "projects" which are workshopped by groups of students. Such projects encourage the communal contribution of the skills of all the group's participants. In this way, Banning ensures, "we are training theatre people and not just actors..." (ibid.).

In contrast, the aim of the Performers Diploma at the University of Cape Town is to produce professional performers; not teachers, directors, or technicians. It is an "actor orientated training, for the established, community and workshop forms of theatre" (Chris Weare, interview 4 October 1990). The South African actor, according to Weare, is being trained for a particularly challenging form of theatre and needs to be highly skilled and adaptable. He describes this theatre as:

> A moveable kind of theatre; one which can be done at the Nico, on the street, and is no longer tied to a particular spatial convention of actor/audience; it is aiming for a more total environmental experience and not old concepts. It is a spontaneous kind of theatre (ibid.).

By further contrast the Drama department at Bloemfontein has particularly strong ties with the Music department and concentrates on training for Opera. The Drama

department at Durban-Westville focuses on training actors for community theatre projects and the teaching profession.

Despite different perceptions, all departments acknowledged that they are ultimately training performers to be highly skilled. Whether it be for the community theatre, the opera, contemporary drama or the classics, the actor needs to be vocally strong and adaptable to meet the demands of the particular theatre form. Most departments agreed that South African theatre should be spontaneous and experimental in its space, time and audience conventions. These suggestions reflect the changing face of contemporary South African theatre, which is demanding that the actor be adaptable, theatrical and individually creative. Sichel has given the umbrella title of "The theatre of transition" to contemporary theatre forms in South Africa (*The Star* TONIGHT! July 10 1990, 8). Teachers and writers have recorded how actor training needs to be re-examined in South Africa to satisfy the needs of this period of transition (Dalrymple 1987, Haynes 1990, Junaid 1989). This was a common theme expressed throughout the returned questionnaires. It is not within the scope of this thesis to examine these needs in detail. However what was common to the opinions of all tutors was the need to train performers holistically and individually, so that they may realise the potential of their own qualities of expression and the totality and completeness of that expression. All returned questionnaires agreed that the incorporation of a movement programme into voice training is essential in this process.

South African theatre training aims at being energised and undivided. These are perhaps the essential qualities of the current theatrical activity. The integrated approach of combined voice and movement classes is more strongly established in some institutions than in others, and perspectives differ. The Rhodes Drama department is experimenting with what they call voice-movement classes (Gordon 1989), which use exercises to free the energy of the body, and in so doing free the energy of the voice. These classes may need to move towards the more product orientated combination classes which are practised at Cape Town, in response to the needs of the Black second language users. During 1990 the Rhodes tutors experimented with team teaching classes in much the same as those being conducted at UCT. Previously voice-movement classes at Rhodes had been taken by a tutor who was trained in both voice and movement teaching. UCT classes are in team

teaching situations with movement and voice teachers. The movement teacher provides a physical warm-up and release, then the voice teacher provides a voice class using the physical release of the previous exercises. The class ends with a session which draws simultaneously on the energies of both the voice and the body. Linklater suggests this session may take the form of a "sound-movement improvisation" (1976, 207). The tutors at Cape Town have suggested that this experience should not be seen as a progression to another section of the combination class, but rather a session "in which the body and voice must both work at optimum for a period" (UCT questionnaire, respondent requested anonymity). This session is also understood to be the time in which the speech processes are trained.

In all departments speech is still trained as a skill based on technical awareness. Some departments, Stellenbosch, Bloemfontein and UCT for example, train speech in small tutorials through technical drills and exercises. They understand the training of speech as static, concentrated and product orientated. Rhodes does this in bigger groups and has attempted to break the physical stillness of these classes by using extra bodily movement to examine the weight and time of sounds. To some extent this is less product related and does not necessarily suit the needs of the second language users. These students need supplementary speech lessons and corrective exercises for emphasis, vowel length and rhythm. These lessons are static and without extra bodily movement or gesture, which may in the initial stages detract from technical learning rather than complement it. Durban and Durban-Westville use verbal dynamics in speech classes, which, whilst considered by some to be an old fashioned speech teaching technique, suit the needs of their second language users. Both departments tend to use verbal dynamics from the initial stages of the speech training, which they do not understand as a distracting process but rather highly supportive.

Tutors at Stellenbosch and Bloemfontein tended to be more wary of the release and freedom implied in the questionnaire's definition of an integrated approach. The questionnaire defined the integrated approach to vocal training as an approach which simultaneously draws on the expressive energies of the voice and the body. Although these departments use combination ideas to teach vocal technique, vocal technique is the primary concern and tends to overshadow a creative learning process. Tutors at Bloemfontein mostly train actors for the Opera, and like the tutors

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at Stellenbosch, find the integrated approach useful but not always as product related as they need it to be. Opera students are being trained as singers and actors so their voices need to be highly skilled and adaptable. Both these departments focus more on the product, whereas in contrast Rhodes focuses primarily on the processes of vocal release. In her returned questionnaire, Mrs Kruger wrote the following:

> One can/should start off with the separation of the two [energies of the voice and the body] in order to learn technique. Thereafter it must be combined to obtain the full technique and to make the student aware that the voice and the body are one (Stellenbosch 1990).

Whilst it is not the purpose of this discussion to critically assess the various attitudes towards combination classes, this comment is particularly significant because it implies the duality of mind and body, which a holistic approach to voice training does not uphold. The majority of returned questionnaires did not uphold dualist attitudes to vocal training.

The attitudes of the tutors at Stellenbosch and Bloemfontein towards the process or product focused training does raise issues for second language users who are judged by first language standards. All departments are addressing this problem. These returns also suggested that combined voice and movement classes were understood as processes without definitive products; a freeing process, a relaxation and release session but not a technical training. Perhaps this was a problem with the definitions presented in the questionnaire, although they seem clear enough to suggest that the process of freeing the voice can never be without the product of vocal competency. The use of movement in a voice training class addresses the fundamental processes of breathing and postural alignment; and in a speech class can be used to examine the expression of emphasis and the weight and quality of a sound. The processes of voice and speech are intricately linked, and the use of movement at any one stage in the development of vocal potential does not make that stage less of a product.

With the exception of two returned questionnaires, every response indicated reference to the principles of the Alexander technique in vocal training. None of the voice teachers who returned these questionnaires are trained Alexander teachers; their interpretations of the technique's principles are based on informal experiences such as workshops or team teaching experiments with an Alexander teacher. There

is only one voice teacher in South Africa of which the writer is aware, who is both a voice and an Alexander teacher. A questionnaire was not sent to this tutor as she is attached to the Music and Singing department at Stellenbosch and these departments were not surveyed. The majority of voice tutors who returned questionnaires had advanced movement training, which provides an understanding of body use and an ability to interpret and apply the principles of the Alexander technique. Only one teacher indicated that she had training in the technique as a pupil and another tutor was in the process of undergoing a course of Alexander lessons. All the voice teachers who returned questionnaires use the principles of the Alexander technique, to teach a greater understanding of postural alignment for good breathing and successful voice production. The technique's principles are used to develop an awareness of unnecessary bodily tensions, which are usually created through postural mal-alignment. It is important to note that it is only a reference to the principles of this technique which can be used by these teachers, as it is considered ethically incorrect for any person not trained in the Alexander technique to teach it. The results of this survey have demonstrated that an application of the Alexander technique is used to some degree in drama departments in South Africa, to complement or supplement the voice student's understanding and awareness of postural alignment and effective body use.

Two important issues were raised as a result of this survey; firstly the need to develop an acute awareness of the related physical issues in voice training, and secondly the need to develop an holistic approach to voice training which will not only ensure that all aspects of the training are unified in intent and aim, but will enhance the individual's awareness of the wholly expressive self. The survey revealed that all teachers are aware of the need for an holistic approach to the training of the actor; to incorporate the efforts of the mind, the body and the imagination in the release of creative energy and potential. The emphasis on the re-establishment of physicality in training seems to be the basis of integrated approaches to voice training. The notion of the integrated approach to voice training can be understood as an approach which constantly draws on the combined expressive energies of the voice and the body. Such an approach provides the greatest challenge to the actor and the greatest awareness of all that is expressive about the person.

The survey suggested that the South African actor needs to be highly skilled, adaptable and flexible. An understanding and awareness of the completeness of the individual's expressive qualities is most successfully attained through a training approach which is challenging and never divided. The majority of returns expressed the opinion that divisive approaches to vocal training are limiting. Such attitudes tend to divide the process from the product, making the latter all important. Furthermore, voice teachers who are trained in some form of bodily awareness and use, seem to be able to contribute significantly to an integrated approach to training the voice. Such an approach reinforces the concept of voice as an attribute of the totality of human expression.

The physicality of the body and it's expressive capability should be at the centre of performer training. As the body is reflective of the multifaceted human context, an interest in physicality will possibly emerge to counter Western society's focus on the cerebral. The workshop form of theatre relies on the dynamic and theatrical expression of the performer. The theatre experience incorporates the reflective prism to which Outram refers: "Like a prism, the body has a unique capacity to concentrate together in the same space different rays from the surrounding world, and to re-emit light re-charged and differentiated" (1989, 5). For these reasons the voice should be trained as a part of the expressive whole and not apart from it.

Conclusion.

The voice is a built-in attribute of the responding and communicating individual. To separate the expressive energies of the voice and the body in training, is a false separation. The body is the undeniable source of the voice. Through the energy of the release of the body the voice will be released, through bodily relaxation the voice will be freed; through tension the voice will be restricted.

Contemporary voice practitioners understand this notion and are consciously integrating the training of the voice with the physicality of the body. Linklater's "blocks" (1976) are psycho-physical in nature and are overcome psycho-physically by working with the integration of the imagination, the vocal demands and the physical body. McCallion (1989), who is trained in the Alexander technique, suggests that voice training can only be effective and successful when the performer has a thorough knowledge and awareness of body use. The individual's use of the whole body will affect the functioning of a specific part; until performers understand efficient body use, they cannot appreciate fully the implications of vocal functioning. Vocal problems are therefore understood as a result of greater bodily mal-functioning; in the same way vocal progress and competence will be a part of the overall effective functioning. The release of vocal energy through the conscious use of physically freeing exercises, as in voice-movement, and Burniston's concept of "verbal dynamics" (1972), are examples of contemporary practices which stress the use of the combined expressive energies of the voice and the gesticulating and moving body.

Contemporary voice training is freer physically in comparison to early twentieth-century practices whose attitudes to physicality were moulded by those of the previous centuries. The restrictions on the body in the eighteenth and nineteenth centuries were reflected in performances which tended to focus on the delivery of the plot and text, and the placing of the actor into static poses in keeping with the surrounding images of elaboration and exaggeration. The physicality of the actor's body was understood in terms of pose or gesture; an attitude which viewed the expressiveness of the body as uni-dimensional as opposed to multi-dimensional. Such an attitude implied incompleteness and duality which did not encourage an understanding of the need to integrate, in actor training, all that is expressive about

the body. The unified expressive potential of voice and body was never completely recognised and utilised, and the body was not used to support the growth of vocal potential but only to decorate the final product in performance.

The rich diversity of the expressive energies in South African theatre needs to be supported by training programmes that neither strip the performer of individual cultural statement, nor superimpose another. Training programmes are incomplete without a structure and a series of aims, yet are limiting if these boundaries are not flexible enough to allow for the individual needs and potential.

This study proposes that by re-educating the notion of individual physicality, the necessary flexibility and democracy in a training programme will be achieved. If the training makes use of the individual's energy and physicality, the skills are learned through individual exploration, rather than because of superimposition. The teacher facilitates individual exploration and development rather authoritatively developing skills in terms of foreign criteria. In a interview with Chris Weare, he suggested that the use of individual physicality in vocal training could be understood as a challenge to certain attitudes inherent in the South African education system, attitudes which teach the student to be obedient to the figure of authority represented by the teacher (Personal interview 4 October 1990). The notion of the individual's physicality being the foundation of training, suggests a democracy which encourages students to develop their own potential, rather than understand their training in terms of obeying the requirements of a figure of knowledge. The teacher facilitates the development of individual potential by putting the body into motion, it is then up to the individual to explore the body's potential in their own way, and through their own sense of expression as an actor.

Implied is a freedom in the process of obtaining vocal skill and a greater emphasis of the "means whereby" this skill is developed. The final product of effective voice and speech for the stage is an important aim which can be achieved through a process that encourages individual potential. In South Africa young actors tend to superimpose their own rhythm of speech onto the text which may be South African, American or British. In so doing they "ignore the rhythm of the real text" (Weare ibid.) and often alter the meaning. Weare suggests that it is the actor's "fear" (ibid.) which underlies this problem. Fear of allowing the real text to speak for itself; the need to control and impose upon the text is understood as performing. Fear of

adopting the rhythm of the text and relinquishing one's own rhythm. Fear of the performance not being well received by established standards. Such fears can be addressed in the training process of the actor, and this study has proposed that physicality in training will assist in confronting this fear. Individual physicality allows the actor to use the rhythm and action which is their own, to find and explore another; it allows the actors to know that they are not being changed - their potential is being extended to respond to a new requirement.

An holistic approach to actor training does not uphold prevailing attitudes to duality, and in so doing, develops the unified expressive energies of the total being. Individual fear is checked once there is a realisation that the person has something to offer which is unique and never inferior. Individual fear is also placed in a different perspective when the student actor resists obeying and concentrates on developing and challenging. When one is not "end-gaining" in the service of obedience, there is room for greater creativity and original expression.

Part of the development of a "peoples culture" which Masekela spoke of, is the development of a "peoples training". Implied in Masekela's "peoples culture" is an acknowledgement of the rich diversity of cultural statements in this country and the need to accord equal status and importance to all. These attitudes should be reflected in performance training for the South African theatre.

The vastness of this area of research has made me aware, retrospectively, that this study is an introduction to greater issues in terms of establishing a suitable actor training programme. The dynamics of present change in South Africa provide a wealth of areas for ongoing research.

Appendix A

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  Questionnaire U
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Designed to gain insight into the methodologies of voice and speech training
practised at university Drama Departments and attitudes to voice-movement
combination classes.

NAME:

MAIN TEACHING INTEREST:

PLEASE GIVE DETAILS OF THE VOICE TRAINING YOU HAVE HAD:
(date, institution, technique)

WHEN YOU TUTOR VOICE AND SPEECH IS THERE ANY PARTICULAR METHODOLOGY WHICH
INFLUENCES YOUR APPROACH ?

PLEASE GIVE DETAILS OF ANY MOVEMENT TRAINING YOU HAVE HAD:

DO YOU TEACH MOVEMENT ? IS THERE ANY PARTICULAR STYLE WHICH INFLUENCES YOUR
APPROACH ?

SECTION A

The aim of this section is to gain insight into how you teach voice and speech
tutorials at second year level. There is a difference between how one actually
teaches (time pressures, fatigue and student needs contribute to this) and
ones ideal methodology.

Please answer the following questions with reference to your actual teaching
practice. The space which has been left after each question, is provided for
any comments, reasons or expressions of "the ideal", that you may wish to
make.

1. How would you describe your general approach to teaching voice and speech
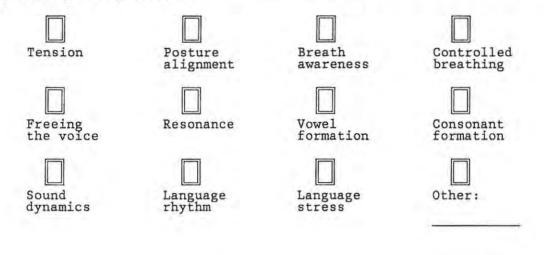   in terms of physicality ?

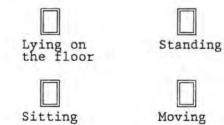   ☐ The tutorial is generally   ☐ The tutorial is generally
     more still than highly   more energised rather
     energised   than very still

2. Please indicate which , if any , of the following areas of voice and
   speech training you teach using some form of movement (i.e. intended
   physical \ bodily action) ?

   ☐ Tension   ☐ Posture   ☐ Breath   ☐ Controlled
                      alignment   awareness   breathing

   ☐ Freeing   ☐ Resonance   ☐ Vowel   ☐ Consonant
     the voice   formation   formation

   ☐ Sound   ☐ Language   ☐ Language   ☐ Other:
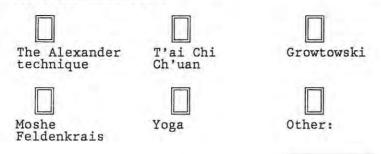   dynamics   rhythm   stress

                                                           _____

3. How do you generally teach an awareness of breathing and the centering of
   the breath ?

   ☐ Lying on   ☐ Standing
     the floor

   ☐ Sitting   ☐ Moving

   (Please indicate if you use combinations.)

4. The unity of the mind and the body is often the focus of a voice tutorial. Do you draw on the principles of any of the following practices/pratitioners ?

☐ The Alexander technique

☐ T'ai Chi Ch'uan

☐ Growtowski

☐ Moshe Feldenkrais

☐ Yoga

☐ Other: _____

Do you have any training in these practices ? What particular ideas do you draw on to influence your work ?

SECTION B

The aim of this section is gain insight into your attitude towards voice-movement combination classes.

Please answer the following questions with a few comments.

1. The voice and the body are both highly expressive. To what extent do you think an <u>integrated</u> <u>approach</u> to teaching voice and speech in a Drama Department should be used , i.e. an approach that constantly combines the expressive energies of both the voice and the body ?

2. Linklater (1976) suggests the ideal combination class as a separate 40 minute movement class , a separate 40 minute voice class and then a 20 minute "sound-movement" improvisation. Could you comment on this idea ?

Please indicate below whether or not you have any objection to being quoted.

☐
No

☐
Yes

Thank you for your time and cooperation.

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